



A WILL ETERNAL

BOOK 06

Er Gen

EPUB CREATION BY LISA HAYES

A Will Eternal

(一念永恒)

by

Er Gen

(耳根)

Synopsis

One will to ceate oceans. One will to summon the mulberry fields.

One will to slaughter countless devils. One will to eradicate innumerable immortals.

Only my will... is eternal.

Acknowledgement

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Book 6: The Strongest Deva

Chapter 855: Journey Of Three

Bai Xiaochun felt great compassion for the gaunt and bedraggled Master God-Diviner. At the same time, he couldn't help but compare Mistress Red-Dust with the female savages of this matriarchal tribe.

When he did that... he suddenly felt blessed.

Of course, he didn't show that on his face. Instead, his compassion grew more obvious. And thus, he took Song Que and Master God-Diviner, and left the tribe.

By means of medicinal pills, Bai Xiaochun helped Master God-Diviner remove the restrictive spell that had been placed on him, and helped him recover from his injured and weakened state. Gradually, the color returned to his face, and more importantly, excitement filled his heart because of his escape from calamity.

It was as if new life had been breathed into him. He was in a wonderful mood, to the point where the sky even seemed bluer than normal, and the sunshine brighter. Everything was going well. However... that good mood only lasted for a few hours.... After the group of three was a short distance away from the matriarchal tribe, Bai Xiaochun began to talk.

“Master God-Diviner, you really ended up in a rough situation! Ai. Before running into you, I thought that Que'er had it worst. Who would have thought that you...?” As he sighed, Song Que snorted coldly in his heart, convinced that Bai Xiaochun was preparing to show off to Master God-Diviner.

And that was exactly right. However, even after the hours which had passed, it was to Bai Xiaochun's irritation that Master God-Diviner didn't ask any questions about how he had fared in the Wildlands. His heart itched with the sensation of having his exploits unlauded, and he was starting to get jumpy in the hopes that Master God-Diviner would make some inquiries.

A strange expression appeared on Master God-Diviner's face. It had been many years since he had been around Bai Xiaochun, but he knew him well. Furthermore, although he hadn't looked closely at the cultivation bases of Bai Xiaochun and Song Que earlier, when he did now, he was shocked at their progress. Then he thought about all of the events which had played out back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect and the Great Wall, and at that point, he decided to change the subject.

"Ah, don't worry about me. I'll recover fine after I do a bit of cultivation." With that, he laughed heartily and rotated his cultivation base a bit.

Bai Xiaochun was less than pleased at Master God-Diviner's complete lack of loyalty. All Bai Xiaochun wanted was to show off a bit, and yet the man wasn't cooperating at all. That made him suddenly think about Xu Baocai. Xu Baocai would definitely have cooperated!

Song Que, on the other hand, was very pleased with how Bai Xiaochun was reacting. Time passed, and the three of them got closer and closer to the Deadmire.

Eventually, when they were only a day away, Master God-Diviner, who still had not given Bai Xiaochun any chances to revel in glory, finally couldn't hold back from asking a certain question.

"Um... where exactly are we going?"

The question caused Song Que's heart to thump, and he was just about to jump in to provide the answer when Bai Xiaochun's eyes lit up. Leaping to his feet, he loudly said, "We're going to the Deadmire! That's the way back to the River-Defying Sect. Have you heard of the Deadmire? It's super dangerous! Devas won't even step inside a single pace, let alone Nascent Soul experts!"

"The Deadmire?" Master God-Diviner said, his eyes widening. He had indeed heard of the Deadmire, and knew that what Bai Xiaochun had said was no exaggeration. According to what he had

heard, not even demigods would dare to set foot inside!

It was a forbidden region where life did not exist!

“Why don’t we just go to the Great Wall...?” Master God-Diviner asked, swallowing hard. Although he had divined that he would be saved, he hadn’t come up with any information regarding what would happen afterward. After escaping the greatest calamity of his entire life, he couldn’t help but worry about his fate.

Off to the side, Song Que sighed. He knew... that nobody would be able to stop Bai Xiaochun from showing off now. And he was right. As soon as the second question left Master God-Diviner’s mouth, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes began to shine even more brightly.

“Hahaha! So you have heard of it! Alright, Master God-Diviner, listen up while I explain!” Feeling very pleased with himself, he slapped his bag of holding to produce a command medallion.

At this point, Master God-Diviner’s eyes went a bit blank as he realized that he had given Bai Xiaochun the opportunity he had been looking for....

“See this? With this command medallion, we can get through the Deadmire easily and safely!” Bai Xiaochun waved the command medallion in front of Master God-Diviner’s face, his eyebrows jumping up and down with excitement.

“I know what you’re wondering. What kind of command medallion is this? And how did I get it? Well, it’s a long story, but we have plenty of time. I’ll explain everything in detail. It all started back when we were teleported here into the Wildlands....”

Bai Xiaochun spent most of the following day recounting his adventures in great detail, putting special emphasis on the status and position he had attained.

At first, Master God-Diviner sighed in regret. However, by the time it got to the part where Bai Xiaochun kidnapped the demigod Giant Ghost King, his eyes nearly popped out of his skull. And

eventually, he came to realize that the Giant Ghost King kidnapping was like nothing compared to the rest of the story!

“Did you just say... that you kidnapped all of the chosen in the Wildlands?!?! And the Giant Ghost King gave you Mistress Red-Dust’s hand in marriage!?”

“You... you actually became the inspections commissioner of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty? And performed countless shakedowns?!?!?”

“You helped the Grand Heavenmaster enact a Proclamation of Universal Grace? You’re an earthly necromancer?!?!?”

“You.... Heavens! You’re not kidding about this, are you? Your apprentice is the Hell-Emperor?!?!?!?” Master God-Diviner was thoroughly shaken, and could hardly believe what he was hearing. The story was so unbelievable it was almost like a fairy tale.

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased with the look in Master God-Diviner’s eyes. At this point, he finally felt he could leave the Wildlands without any regret in his heart.

However, he also decided it would be better to err on the side of modesty.

“Yeah, I did okay. Actually, I wasn’t even trying very hard.” Swishing his sleeve, he stuck his chin up and said, “You know I can reduce most things to ashes with the swish of a sleeve. It’s not the first time.”

To Master God-Diviner, it felt like thunder crashing in his ears, and the truth was, he didn’t really believe it. But... then he noticed the unsightly expression on Song Que’s face, and how he wasn’t saying anything at all. At that point, Master God-Diviner’s heart was struck by great waves of shock. That was especially true considering the final part of the story regarding Bai Xiaochun’s apprentice being the Hell-Emperor.

It was to Master God-Diviner’s grief and shock that he realized the cruel truth: Bai Xiaochun really did rock all creation wherever

he went!

In the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, he formed a powerful underworld organization!

At the Great Wall, he fought his way to the coveted rank of major general!

And in the Wildlands, he shockingly ended up as the Master of the Hell-Emperor!

Master God-Diviner almost couldn't wrap his mind around it all. Even just one of the things Bai Xiaochun had done would be enough to shake anyone to the core, let alone all of them together.

It was roughly evening when the group of three, including the dazed Master God-Diviner, arrived at the location where the Heavenspan River region's northern and eastern Great Walls had once met. This was the entrance to... a land devoid of life!

It was actually a towering and winding mountain range that, upon being entered... led to a location no one had ever been to. The Deadmire!

As soon as they caught sight of the mountains, Bai Xiaochun patted his bag of holding, confident that the gravekeeper had been telling the truth. Gritting his teeth, he flew into the mountains!

Song Que took a deep breath. He didn't particularly feel like going into the Deadmire, but knew he had no choice. The Great Wall had collapsed, and the Celestial had sealed the area, making passage back to the Heavenspan region that way impossible.

If they didn't go through the Deadmire, it would be impossible to say how long they would have to wait to get home. Eyes flickering with determination, Song Que followed Bai Xiaochun.

Master God-Diviner shook off his daze, and as he did, his eyes were filled with awe and veneration. To him, Bai Xiaochun actually seemed like a god. As of this moment, he was far more confident in Bai Xiaochun's ability to traverse the Deadmire than

Song Que was, and therefore, it was without hesitation that he followed along!

Chapter 856: Singing From The Bone Galleon

There were many stories and opinions about how the Heavenspan Realm's Deadmire had been formed. No consensus had ever been reached, and it was entirely likely that only a handful of people in the entire world knew the truth about its origin.

For one thing, it was an enigma as to why any living being that entered the area would die. Neither devas nor demigods who entered the Deadmire ever came back... that much was confirmed fact.

Although there were people who had taken an interest in the Deadmire, and devised certain ways to study it, the only thing that they came to find out was that it was filled with a white sea.

It was a sea composed, not of water, but... bones!

From the peaks of the mountains that bordered the Deadmire itself, all one could see was vast, endless fog. Beneath the fog was an endless stretch of white bones that looked almost like a sea of water.

There were human bones and beast bones, although in general, it was difficult to distinguish exactly what types of bones there were. Furthermore, the entire area was deathly quiet, and filled with a palpable rancor.

No living beings existed. No sound existed.

And the silence was terrifying.

Many of the legends regarding the Deadmire involved some war of epic proportions that was fought even before the world came to exist. Supposedly, the battlefield upon which that war had been fought eventually came to be the sea of bones that was the Deadmire.

There were actually four Deadmires in the world, and they were

all the same....

In the Deadmire that existed on the border between east and north, it was possible to see three figures. The first was Bai Xiaochun, who trembled in fear and anxiety as he walked across the bones. The crunching sounds that came with each step broke the silence, echoing out in bizarre and eerie fashion.

Despite his confidence in the gravekeeper, Bai Xiaochun was still terrified, and gripped his command medallion until his hands were white. Following behind him were Song Que and Master God-Diviner, both of whom trembled in anxiety.

Thankfully, as soon as they had stepped into the Deadmire itself, the command medallion had lit up like a candle, sending light out for dozens of meters in all directions, and pushing the fog away from them.

That had eased their fear to some extent. As they walked along, the odd crunching of their footsteps echoed out constantly. Considering that they were new to this place, they didn't dare to attempt flying, and moved along on foot, casting vigilant glances around them as they went.

Because of the thick fog, it seemed to Bai Xiaochun and his companions that they were walking along through the dead of night, with their small, lit area making them very conspicuous....

Bai Xiaochun's face was ashen as he crunched along. Based on what he could tell so far, there really were no living things in the Deadmire.

Three days passed. Although they weren't flying, they still moved along quickly. By this point, Song Que seemed used to the crunching of the bones, and the stifling pressure of the fog and darkness. His expression was actually somewhat calm. Master God-Diviner also seemed to be doing well. Bai Xiaochun was the only one who was on full alert.

Song Que couldn't help but snort coldly in his heart at Bai Xiaochun's anxiety. It also seemed to fuel his own bravery, and he began to stomp his feet down a bit louder. However, Bai Xiaochun was not pleased with that.

Master God-Diviner also happened to feel that his actions were a bit extreme, and quickly said, "Keep it down, Song Que!"

Song Que snorted, and was just about to offer a retort when, all of a sudden, the hyper-vigilant Bai Xiaochun blurted, "Did you guys hear that?!?!"

Song Que stopped walking, as did Master God-Diviner. Everyone focused on listening, and although they couldn't hear anything at first, it only took a moment for both of their faces to fall. Somewhere off in the fog... there was singing?!?!

It sounded like a woman. However, she was apparently so far away that they couldn't quite make out what she was singing. Regardless, the mere presence of the singing caused Bai Xiaochun's face to drain of blood.

"No way. There's no way that Gongsun Wan'er could have fled to this place, is there?!?" However, as the singing continued, he realized that it didn't actually sound like Gongsun Wan'er.

Song Que and Master God-Diviner looked around nervously, trying to identify the direction the singing was coming from. After a moment, Master God-Diviner's eyes widened, and he pointed in a certain direction.

"There!"

Bai Xiaochun and Song Que immediately turned to look in that direction, which was when they saw... countless corpses! These corpses were not just bones laying around among the other bones, they were walking upright. There were thousands upon thousands of them, bent at the waist, black ropes strung over their shoulders, making them look almost like boatmen pulling a huge galleon!!

Behind the more than ten thousand human-sized corpses were more than a thousand corpses of giants! All of them had black ropes strung over their shoulders too, and were tugging them along!

However, there was more! Behind the thousand giants were more than a hundred beast corpses, each one more than 3,000 meters tall! All of the beasts looked different. Shockingly, in the very back, there were three bone dragons!

To the astonishment of all three cultivators, what next appeared before their eyes, right behind the three bone dragons... was a massive galleon, fully 30,000 meters in length, and crafted entirely of bone!!

The galleon was pitch black, and in very bad condition, with tattered flags attached to dilapidated flagpoles. However, despite its condition, it still radiated a shocking energy!

Strangely, despite the fact that the corpses were pulling the galleon across the surface of the sea of bones, no resulting sound could be heard. The entire Deadmire was still completely quiet... with the exception of the sound of singing coming from within the galleon itself!

Bai Xiaochun was already trembling with intense fear, and had begun to back up.

“Something's off here,” he said nervously, his face pale white. “What's a warship like this doing in the Deadmire?! And what are all those corpses pulling it for? This is terrifying! Why don't we go back. I think... maybe the Great Wall is a better idea after all!” However, even as his words left his mouth, the enormous galleon suddenly vanished....

The corpses went with it, and even the singing was gone, as if it had never existed to begin with.

Bai Xiaochun's jaw dropped.

Song Que and Master God-Diviner were also frightened. There was something very strange about it all. As for Song Que, when he looked over at Bai Xiaochun and saw how scared he was, his own fear vanished. Snorting derisively, he said, “The Deadmire is supposed to be strange. What’s so scary about some boat?! It was just an illusion, that’s all. Just ignore it and it goes away. What, Bai Xiaochun, are you scared or something?”

When Bai Xiaochun heard that, he glared back.

“Me? Scared of ghosts?” He swished his sleeve. “I’m virtually a heavenly necromancer, and the most important ghost in the world is my apprentice. Why would I be afraid of ghosts? Are you kidding me!?”

Song Que chuckled coldly, but didn’t say anything else. Grabbing Master God-Diviner, he continued on the way they had originally been heading. Master God-Diviner looked back and forth between Song Que and Bai Xiaochun, but did nothing more than smile wryly and follow Song Que.

“Maybe it really was an illusion....” Bai Xiaochun thought, feeling a bit embarrassed. How could he have ever guessed that a galleon like that would appear so randomly, and then just vanish? Rubbing his nose, he reminded himself that he outranked Song Que, and therefore, needed to watch out for him. Sighing, he hurried along after the other two so that they would remain in the protective perimeter created by his command medallion.

An entire month flew by, during which time the strange galleon never appeared again. Gradually, Bai Xiaochun was starting to calm down. At the same time, the group began to pick up speed.

However, only a few days after that, their faces all fell when they yet again heard the sound of a woman singing!

This time, the song was much clearer. In fact... they could hear the lyrics clearly!

It was a strange song, the type that could not be forgotten once heard. It told the story of a mother whose arm was eaten by her own child!

Chapter 857: River-Defying Sect In Peril

The song and its lyrics caused Bai Xiaochun's hair to stand on end. Song Que and Master God-Diviner were visibly shaken. That was when the enormous bone galleon appeared again, and this time, it was much closer to them!

It was only about 1,500 meters away, allowing them to see it very clearly. Even as they stared, reeling in shock, the singing ended, and the galleon vanished.

This time, Song Que didn't offer any cold snorts. Even his face was a bit paler than usual. The group of three exchanged glances, and clearly, they were all convinced that something very strange was going on. The first time they had seen the boat, it had vanished roughly 3,000 meters away from them. The second time, it was only 1,500 meters away.

None of them dared to ponder... how close it would get the third time!

By now, it would take a full month to retrace their steps, and furthermore, they had no way to guarantee that something might not happen on the way back. According to the map of the Deadmire Bai Xiaochun had, it would only take them a total of about three months to cross.

That meant that they were very close to being at the halfway point.

Finally, Song Que gritted his teeth and said, "That ship showed up twice in a month. If we pick up some speed, we can probably make it out of here before it comes again!"

In response, Master God-Diviner nodded vigorously. Bai Xiaochun muttered to himself a bit, still convinced that the gravekeeper wasn't out to harm him. Finally, he agreed, whereupon the three of them finally flew up into the air, becoming

beams of light that shot off into the distance.

Another half a month went by, during which time the galleon never reappeared. However, Bai Xiaochun didn't let his guard down at all. He looked around vigilantly as they sped along. Master God-Diviner wasn't capable of the same speed as Bai Xiaochun and Song Que, so Bai Xiaochun had to pull him along.

One evening after the half-month of travel, they suddenly heard that bone-chilling song for a third time!

The singing was even more clear, and shockingly, the bone galleon appeared in front of them again, less than a thousand meters away!

It was now very clear. In fact, Bai Xiaochun could clearly see the three flags flying on the galleon, each of which was embroidered with a ghost face!

The one in the middle had green skin and long fangs, and appeared to be glaring ferociously straight at them.

Song Que and Master God-Diviner were both visibly shaken as the huge galleon was dragged closer and closer to their group. 900 meters. 600 meters....

As it neared, Bai Xiaochun could see the corpses more closely. Although their faces were completely expressionless, they emanated a deep-seated aura of resentment!

Some of the corpses were little more than bones, but some had rotting flesh attached to them, and even clothing. There were all different types of clothing present, some from modern times, some from ancient. Clearly some of these corpses had been soul cultivators, and some had been ordinary cultivators....

Furthermore, as for the pitch-black galleon itself, Bai Xiaochun could now see that it was riddled with holes, as though it had been involved in some dramatic battle.

After the initial shock, the group of three all began to back away

from the galleon. However, that was when the song ended, and the galleon faded away.

This time, it vanished when it was only 300 meters away from them!!

Bai Xiaochun's heart was pounding, and Song Que and Master God-Diviner were trembling. By this point, sensations of imminent crisis were alive in all of them.

"It's only been half a month!" Song Que said. "And it got even closer. The next time, it will probably hit us!!"

"Dammit, what the hell kind of place is this?!?!" Master God-Diviner added. "I don't want to be one of those corpses pulling that galleon!!"

Glaring, Song Que continued, "Didn't you say that we would be safe with that command medallion of yours, Bai Xiaochun!?"

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were bloodshot. Spinning, he yelled at Master God-Diviner and Song Que, "Stow it, you two. We've been going too slow. I'll carry you. That way, we can definitely get out of here in half a month!"

Bai Xiaochun still trusted the gravekeeper, but considering the current circumstances, his fear was getting the better of him. Grabbing Song Que and Master God-Diviner, he unleashed speed comparable to a deva and shot through the air along their original path.

He flew without stopping for seven days!

And yet, it didn't matter how incredibly fast Bai Xiaochun was moving. On evening of the seventh day, the group of three... yet again heard that bizarre song!

It was so loud and clear it almost seemed like the woman was singing it right into their ears. At the same time, the enormous bone galleon appeared, only 300 meters away in the fog.

This time, none of the group of three even had time to look at it. A massive gravitational force sprang out and grabbed ahold of them. At the same time, the corpses pulling the galleon tugged it forward at incredible speed. To the shock of Bai Xiaochun, Song Que and Master God-Diviner, the corpses slammed right into them!

Bai Xiaochun screamed as his vision blurred. Then things became clear again, and he found himself standing on the deck of the galleon along with Song Que and Master God-Diviner!

The corpses down below pulled the galleon through the fog, with them standing right there on it!

As they stood there on the ghost galleon, something else was happening far away from the Deadmire. In the eastern Heavenspan River, in the Middle Reaches, the sound of bells filled the River-Defying Sect.

The sound was like a great weight pressing down onto the numerous cultivators in the sect. Everyone knew that the River-Defying Sect was in a very precarious position.

Up to this point, not a single one of the sect's patriarchs had been able to break into the Deva Realm. Because of that fact, the other great sects in the Middle Reaches, the Starry River Court, the Dao River Court and the Polarity River Court, had become restless. Frictions had increased, and conflicts grew more intense, until some River-Defying Sect cultivators were even killed.

Back when the River-Defying Sect had first arrived in the Middle Reaches, they had disturbed the other three great sects' profits. And then there was the matter of Bai Xiaochun causing problems in the legacy zone, which led to the River-Defying Sect taking away vast amounts of resources from the other sects. Worse was how the chosen from the other three sects all had turtle marks on their bodies that couldn't be removed. Because of all this, the other three sects' hatred of Bai Xiaochun and the River-Defying Sect eventually seeped down into their bones.

It was now nearing the time when the legacy zone would be opened again. Therefore, the other three great sects had secretly contacted the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect and received tacit approval... to begin a war of sect extermination!!

Bells were being rung in the River-Defying Sect because of information recently sent by spies, informing them of what was happening. In the past, the River-Defying Sect had sent emissaries to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to plead for leniency. After all, Bai Xiaochun had been a major general, and there were certain people in the sect who owed him favors. Those people had managed to care for the River-Defying Sect to some extent. Had they not, the other three Middle Reaches sects would have made a move earlier.

Unfortunately, Bai Xiaochun was nowhere to be found. Although stories about his exploits in the Wildlands had circulated, and people knew he was alive, it was as the ancient saying went, distant water won't put out a fire close at hand.

And thus, the patriarchs all emerged from secluded meditation, activated the sect's grand spell formation, and prepared to fight to the death!!

No one in the River-Defying Sect was confident in being able to hold their own.... After all, the other sects had three devas on their side. Although they had used the easiest and least powerful method to become Mortal-Dao devas... they were still devas!

“The sect's survival will be decided during this war!”

“We'll defend the sect to the death!!”

As the bells tolled, and the River-Defying Sect cultivators let out battle cries, a powerful roar erupted out from somewhere in the sect. A huge beast appeared, hundreds of meters long, completely violet in color, with black flames spreading out beneath his feet. He looked like a mix between a dragon and a qilin, and had soaring energy that even the patriarchs in the great circle of the Nascent

Soul found exciting. Those fluctuations... were those of a beast king!

It was Bruiser!

Chapter 858: The Bizarre Bone Galleon

The River-Defying Sect had been at odds with the other three great sects for years, and now, open conflict was imminent. Even as the fighting was just about to break out, Bai Xiaochun, Song Que and Master God-Diviner were in the Deadmire, struck with terror even as they longed to be back in that very same sect.

The three of them stood on the deck of the battered and damaged ghost galleon, their expressions flickering as they sized up their surroundings.

There were holes in the pitch-black deck itself, evidence of what must have surely been a fantastic battle fought at some point in the ancient past. Despite the galleon's dilapidated state, it still thrummed with a powerful aura that filled Bai Xiaochun with the same type of fear he had experienced when in the presence of the Celestial. In fact, the galleon seemed even a bit more powerful than that!

It shook him all the way down to his soul!

After looking around nervously for a moment, Bai Xiaochun blurred into motion, heading toward the side of the galleon, where he planned to simply leap over the edge. Song Que and Master God-Diviner joined him, and yet, as they got close to the edge, a black shield of light sprang up, which they thumped into!

It didn't matter that Bai Xiaochun could crush early Deva Realm cultivators, and fight toe-to-toe with those in the mid stage. As soon as he made contact with that shield, he simply bounced right off of it.

He bashed into it again, and the same thing happened.

It was the same with Song Que and Master God-Diviner. Panting, they all began to look around, extremely serious expressions on their faces.

The deck of the galleon was almost completely empty, with no major structures on it whatsoever. There was what appeared to be a cabin or bridge, which was the only way to get to the lower decks. From the look of it, other structures had once existed on the deck, but had long since been destroyed!

Sticking up from the cabin was the flagpole with those three ghost face flags. And above the doorway was a primitive eight trigrams mirror.

Other than that, there was nothing else visible.

Song Que had a very unsightly expression on his face as he began to walk around and inspect the galleon. As for Master God-Diviner, he was gasping for breath and shivering. He had already been in a weak state before, and once on the deck of the galleon, felt something like a boundless coldness seeping into him.

“Hurry up and do some divinations, Master God-Diviner,” Bai Xiaochun said. “See if you can figure out a way off of this galleon!” He glanced over at the cabin door, and was struck with the feeling that the ghost galleon was in control of his very life. Furthermore, he was convinced that the galleon wanted the three of them to enter the cabin door!

Master God-Diviner’s terror mounted with every moment that passed. After hearing Bai Xiaochun’s suggestion, he reached into the fold of his robe and pulled out a copper coin, which was a magical item that he used to perform divinations. Normally speaking, he was very protective of the copper coin. In fact, back in that savage tribe where he had been held captive, he had been allowed to keep the coin on his person when performing his duties. As soon as he pulled it out, he drew upon the various magical techniques and divine abilities that he used for divination.

Unfortunately, it was in that moment that flag with the green-skinned, long-fanged ghost face suddenly rippled.

As a result, Master God-Diviner’s hand trembled, and the coin

slipped through his fingers! It landed on the deck, rolled on its side, and then fell into one of the cracks and disappeared!

“My magic coin!” Master God-Diviner shrieked. “It's completely one-of-a-kind! It's my life essence magical item, with my name engraved on it!” He rushed over to the crack into which the coin had fallen, but could see only darkness below. It was impossible to determine where exactly his magic coin had landed. Master God-Diviner immediately began to weep. Even during his torment in the savage tribe, he had managed to keep his copper coin safe, only to lose it on this bizarre galleon.

The sight of Master God-Diviner losing his copper coin right before trying to divine some important information instantly caused Bai Xiaochun's mood to drop. After looking around, he finally came to focus on the cabin.

As for Song Que, he had surveyed the deck and found nothing, and also turned his attention to the cabin. Walking over, he stood in front of the door and examined it with a frown.

Master God-Diviner had a scowl on his face and tears in his eyes, and was feeling very irritated at Bai Xiaochun. However, he didn't dare to say anything. Eventually, his gaze came to rest on the cabin, whereupon his eyes lit up.

His attention was especially drawn to the eight trigrams mirror. The mirror was dark, and did not seem capable of projecting any light or images. Furthermore, there was something eerie and sinister about it. From what Master God-Diviner could tell, it was clearly something extraordinary.

“That must be some sort of treasure!” he thought. Master God-Diviner's understanding of the arts of divination led him to the conclusion that this eight trigrams mirror was perfectly suited to him. That was especially true considering how depressed he was at the loss of his magic coin. Eyes widening, he hurried over and reached out toward the mirror.

“Hold on!!” Bai Xiaochun shouted, surprised at Master God-Diviner’s fearlessness. However, he was too late to interfere. Master God-Diviner had already grabbed the mirror.

Bai Xiaochun felt his head spinning from how dangerous everything seemed. Even Song Que was struck with fear by Master God-Diviner’s impulsiveness.

“What are you doing, Master God-Diviner?!” he said, rotating his cultivation base at full readiness. However, nothing unusual happened. The corpses outside continued to pull the galleon along at the same speed as before.

When it was clear that nothing would happen, Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief. As for Master God-Diviner, he realized he had acted rashly, and felt a bit guilty. However, he quickly put the eight trigrams mirror into his bag of holding.

“My magic coin fell into that crack,” he said defensively, “so I’m going to take this copper mirror as a replacement.”

Bai Xiaochun rubbed the bridge of his nose, and Song Que glared briefly at Master God-Diviner before scanning the deck once again. Then, his eyes flickered with determination.

“We’re on a weird boat that is taking us who-knows-where,” he said. “And it’s not letting us off. I say... let’s go below decks and explore a bit. Maybe we can figure out what exactly is going on!” With that, he ignored Bai Xiaochun and Master God-Diviner, and stepped toward the cabin door.

“Wait a minute, Song Que!!” Bai Xiaochun said loudly.

However, Song Que completely ignored him, and disappeared into the cabin.

Bai Xiaochun was starting to get angry at how impulsive Master God-Diviner and Song Que were being. Bai Xiaochun was the leader of the group, right? They should definitely be listening to his orders.

“Are these guys crazy or something? One glance at some stupid mirror and he puts his life on the line? And the other one runs right off into the jaws of death?!” As Bai Xiaochun stood there feeling anxious, Master God-Diviner hesitated for a moment. The truth was that he was still feeling bad about his magic coin, and for all he knew, it was there below decks, waiting to be found. Gritting his teeth, he walked toward the cabin door.

“Song Que is right. It doesn't seem like this galleon wants to hurt us. If it did, we would be dead already. The best thing is to check things out below decks.”

With that, he disappeared into the cabin, leaving Bai Xiaochun completely alone on the main deck.

His expression grew more unsightly by the moment as he stood there staring at the cabin door. For some reason, it seemed like the sinister and vicious mouth of some evil ghost.

Suddenly, a cold chill ran up his spine. “Wait a second,” he thought. “Song Que has never been very impulsive. And neither has Master God-Diviner.... If they were, they wouldn't have survived for so long in the cultivation world. Why did they start acting so unusual on this weird galleon!?”

He looked around, but didn't see anything unusual. Off in the distance, the fog was as thick as ever, and everything was as quiet as it usually was.

After a long moment of hesitant thought, he finally clenched his jaw and made his decision. Since the galleon wasn't letting him leave, he would enter the cabin. He couldn't just watch as Song Que and Master God-Diviner delivered themselves up to calamity. Eyes bloodshot, he slapped his bag of holding to produce some spare paper talismans, and then slapped them down all over his body. He also pulled out some suits of armor, which he donned. Then he charged through the door!

After Bai Xiaochun disappeared into the cabin, the green-

skinned, long-fanged ghost face on the middle flag suddenly smiled!

Chapter 859: Mural. Live Forever.

Just inside the cabin was a staircase leading down. Upon entering, Bai Xiaochun couldn't see Song Que, but did catch a glimpse of Master God-Diviner at the bottom of the stairs.

He hurried forward and then climbed cautiously down the stairs, which put him on the first deck below the main deck!

The instant he stepped onto deck 1, he caught sight of both Song Que and Master God-Diviner, looking around with wide eyes.

The fact that they were both there unharmed caused Bai Xiaochun to breathe a sigh of relief. Without any hesitation, he hurried over to their side.

Deck 1 wasn't very large, and much like the main deck, was completely empty, except for another staircase off in the distance, leading further down.

However, the bulkheads were covered with a massive mural!

It depicted the sky. It was not an ordinary blue sky, but rather, looked more like an ocean covered with waves. In fact, were it not for the occasional clouds floating about, Bai Xiaochun wouldn't even have been able to tell that it depicted a sky.

Most shocking of all was that the enormous mural also depicted a huge hand. The hand occupied nearly half of the sky, and was pushing down from it toward the land below!

Just looking at the mural caused Bai Xiaochun's mind to start spinning. For some reason, it instantly filled him with a pressure that was difficult to put into words.

Furthermore, he experienced a sensation of utter despair, as though this hand contained the power... to destroy the world!!

The ground in the mural was parched and cracked. Standing upon it were three astonishing giants, whose expressions didn't

contain even a hint of the fear of death. All of the giants' hands were stretched up to fight back against the enormous hand descending from the sky!

There was nothing else in the mural except for that. Bai Xiaochun had no idea exactly what it meant, nor did Song Que or Master God-Diviner. However, it was a shocking sight to look at.

A long moment passed. Bai Xiaochun was the first to come to his senses. Face ashen, he backed up a few steps, mind spinning with both fear and pain.

“How can a mural have such shocking power!? It stabs you all the way to the heart and soul!!” At this point, he realized that Song Que and Master God-Diviner were just standing there trembling, their eyes bloodshot and filled with despair. Therefore, he swished his sleeve and sent a burst of power into them.

Song Que shivered, blood oozing out of his mouth as he regained his senses. He staggered backward, his expression one of confusion. As for Master God-Diviner, his cultivation base wasn't even close to the level of Song Que's right now, so he coughed up a mouthful of blood and sagged in place.

“What kind of mural is this!?!?” he said, gasping for breath and not daring to look at it again.

At this point, Bai Xiaochun looked at his companions and, realizing that Master God-Diviner was a bit closer, edged over to his side. “This place is too weird!” he said. “Let's go back. We can look for a way off the galleon back on the main deck. I have the feeling things will only get more terrifying the further down you go!”

However, even as the words left Bai Xiaochun's mouth, Song Que suddenly burst into motion, heading directly toward the stairs leading to deck 2. It only took him a moment to reach them, whereupon he instantly began to climb down.

Master God-Diviner did the same thing, completely ignoring Bai Xiaochun. Bai Xiaochun reached out and grabbed Master God-Diviner, but the moment he did, Master God-Diviner spun in place, a vicious expression on his face as he let out a soundless howl.

As he did, a green-skinned, long-fanged ghost face appeared on top of Master God-Diviner's face. Bai Xiaochun felt a blast of power pushing his hand away, and then Master God-Diviner was gone down the stairs!

Bai Xiaochun was shaken, and an unsightly expression could be seen on his face. His heart was also starting to pound. After all, his words from moments ago had actually been a test!

He had noticed on the main deck that something odd was going on, and decided to see if he could figure out what it was. Obviously, this galleon was controlling both Master God-Diviner and Song Que!

"That green-skinned, long-fanged ghost just now... looked exactly like the one on that flag outside!"

With that, he turned to go back up the stairs to the main deck, only to find that... the staircase was gone!

Goosebumps broke out all over him, and his face turned as ashen as death. All of a sudden, this place seemed even more sinister than before, and his heart was pounding so hard and loud it was like a drum.

"What do I do, what do I do!?" All he could do was grip tight the command medallion the gravekeeper had given him. That was where all his hope lay.

"I'm the Hell-Emperor's Master! There aren't any ghosts or souls in this world that would dare to provoke me!!" Scowling on the verge of tears, he tried to work up some confidence by pulling out a tongue of multi-colored flame. Then, he gritted his teeth and headed toward the staircase leading to the next deck.

It was really too terrifying to be alone. Furthermore, he couldn't just sit around and watch Song Que and Master God-Diviner be controlled.

“Dammit. If I had known things would turn out like this, I would have gone back to the River-Defying Sect alone!” Regret pricking at his heart, he advanced cautiously toward the staircase, at the bottom of which... was deck 2!!

As soon as he arrived, he exercised the utmost caution possible. He rotated his cultivation base and sent some divine sense out in all directions in the hopes of detecting anything unusual. He absolutely did not want to be surprised by anything like that mural.

However, deck 2 was a bit different than he had imagined. There didn't seem to be anything dangerous about it all. Furthermore, it was a lot bigger than deck 1.

There were no murals, only flickering, yellow candlelight that made the area a bit dim.

Furthermore, right in the middle of the deck, there was a rocking chair!

It sat there, still and unmoving, seemingly completely ordinary in nature. Right in front of the rocking chair were two corpses which were little more than skeletons!!

They were on their knees in front of the chair, one corpse apparently that of a man, the other, a woman. One skeleton appeared to be made of gold, the other crystal. Although they were kneeling, from their posture, it looked like they had been embracing each other.

It was a terrifying scene to begin with, but it was made more bizarre... by the fact that the two embracing corpses' heads... were fusing together! The process wasn't complete; they were only half-fused. But it was bizarre nonetheless!!

The mere sight caused Bai Xiaochun's heart to seize with fear. To top it all off, Song Que and Master God-Diviner were standing motionless right in front of the two corpses.

“Are they going to get fused together too!?!?!?” Bai Xiaochun had no idea what was going on, but he was convinced that this place was terrifying and bizarre beyond reason.

Something seemed very strange about the whole situation, and it had his heart pounding. After studying the scene for a moment, his gaze slid from Song Que and Master God-Diviner to the corpse with the golden skeleton.

After looking at it more closely, his eyes widened dramatically!

“That's the aura of the Undying Live Forever Technique!! It's... the manifestation of the complete Undying Codex!!” Bai Xiaochun's adam's apple bobbed up and down with fear as waves of astonishment crashed around in his mind. He was by no means mistaken. After all, he cultivated the Undying Codex of the Undying Live Forever Technique, just like the Blood Ancestor and this golden skeleton!

“If this golden skeleton mastered the Undying Codex, then... the corpse with the crystal skeleton must have cultivated....” Almost immediately, he realized that the corpse with the crystal skeleton still had abundant life force left in it, as if it were the type of thing that could live forever!!

“The Live Forever Codex!!” Bai Xiaochun had known from the very beginning that the Undying Live Forever Technique was broken up into the Undying Codex and the Live Forever Codex. However, he had never encountered the latter, only the former. Never could he have imagined that he would unexpectedly encounter two corpses that had both cultivated the Undying Live Forever Technique!!

His mind felt like countless bolts of lightning were striking it. However, he still didn't understand why these two people, who

had cultivated the Undying Codex and Live Forever Codex respectively, would be fusing their heads together....

But then, a chill ran up his spine, and his hair began to stand on end as... the previously unmoving rocking chair... suddenly began to rock back and forth!!

Furthermore, it was just possible to make out the shadow of a person sitting in it....

Chapter 860: A Ghost!

Deck 2 of the ghost galleon was as silent as death. As the rocking chair slowly began to rock back and forth, a sensation of dire creepiness immediately filled Bai Xiaochun.

He shivered from head to toe, and almost couldn't hold back from screaming.

There was obviously nobody sitting in the chair, and yet, it was acting as if there were. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun was almost certain that he could see the shadowy image of an old woman there, face pale, staring at him with a ghastly smile.

"A ghost!!" Bai Xiaochun shrieked. Heart pounding, he reached out, grabbed Song Que and Master God-Diviner, and pulled them away with him as he rushed away from the rocking chair.

His two companions seemed completely bereft of their senses. Their eyes were blank and their bodies were stiff, and they did nothing to resist Bai Xiaochun as he pulled them away.

At the same time, the rocking chair began to rock back and forth with increased urgency.

Even more shocking, the two corpses began to quiver, and glow with both golden and crystalline light.

Bai Xiaochun was wailing inwardly. The sight of the rocking chair going back and forth caused his scalp to tingle madly. Tossing both Song Que and Master God-Diviner into his bag of holding, he fled back to the staircase and ran up to the deck above.

He moved with blinding speed, and within the blink of an eye, was at the top of the staircase. Just as he lunged past the last step, his vision blurred, and before he could even breathe a sigh of relief, his eyes widened as much as a cat's whose tail had been stamped on.

Shockingly, he found himself looking at two corpses and a

rocking chair. He... was still on deck 2!!

The rocking chair was rocking back and forth rapidly, and this time, it was to Bai Xiaochun's utter shock that he could hear a strange moaning howl coming from it.

"How could this be happening!?!?" Spinning in place, he ran back down the stairs, drawing upon both his cultivation base and fleshly body power. However, at the bottom of the stairs, his vision blurred again, and when he could see clearly again, he was looking at the corpses and the rocking chair!

It was still deck 2!!

Clearly, he would end up back on the same deck no matter what he did. By now, the rocking chair was rocking back and forth so vigorously that it was edging forward, as if it were trying to catch him!

Bai Xiaochun was so scared he was about to collapse. Letting out a shout, he waved his hand, sending out a blast of air toward the rocking chair.

However, the air simply passed right through it. By this point, he was sure that he was in a moment of deadly crisis. There was no time for thought or planning. He needed to get out of here immediately, before the rocking chair got too close to him and ended his life!

"Time to go for broke!!" Yet again, he burst into motion, leaving a trail of afterimages behind as he raced back up the stairs. This time, though, he didn't go to the end of the stairs. Instead, he clenched his hand into a fist, which caused a black vortex to spring into being!

The air around him immediately distorted. It didn't matter that he was in a ghost galleon in the Deadmire, there was still some energy of heaven and earth present. Thanks to the gravitational force created by the black vortex, that energy was sucked in, along

with the power of his cultivation base, his qi and blood, and even his soul!

A shadowy image appeared behind him, wearing imperial robes and an imperial crown. At the same time, a domineering aura erupted out.

This was none other than... the Undying Emperor's Fist!

Bai Xiaochun was already in the great circle of the Undying Bones, and therefore, his urgent unleashing of this fist strike contained, not just the previous double level of power... but five times!

Five times his normal fleshly body power gave him terrifying battle prowess that even late Deva Realm experts would gasp at.

“Open up!!” he shouted, slamming his fist into the stairs!

As he punched out with his fist, the shadowy emperor joined him, their fists superimposing in a massive attack!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

A huge blast of wind erupted out, along with a roaring sound like that of an enormous dragon. As his fist landed on the staircase, it shattered like a mirror, and he leapt through the resulting hole.

His vision swam, and when it cleared, he was in an unfamiliar location!

Seeing that he was no longer on deck 2, he breathed a sigh of relief.

“What the hell kind of place is this? I shouldn't have come here! I shouldn't even have come to the Deadmire!!” His heart was filled with regret, and he was finally starting to think that the gravekeeper had actually screwed him over. If he had known that the Deadmire had a weird ghost galleon like this, he would never have come here!

However, he had few options at hand. Song Que and Master God-

Diviner had clearly lost their minds; if he hadn't grabbed them and put them in his bag of holding, they would probably still be back on deck 2.

"What am I supposed to do...?" he thought, scowling on the verge of tears. Using the Undying Emperor's Fist had drained his fleshly body power; thankfully, now that he was in the great circle of the Undying Bones, he didn't feel dangerously weak like he had been in the past.

Although he had just breathed a sigh of relief, that only lasted for a moment before he started to tremble again. His eyes widened, and his mind reeled with even more terror than before at the fact that... he was not on deck 2, or even deck 1!

He wasn't on any specific deck at all, but rather, a private cabin. It was... a woman's dressing room!!

The room contained a dilapidated bed covered with dust and spiderwebs, next to which was a vanity!

The vanity looked ancient, and was also covered with dust. It also had cracks on its surface, and one of the corners looked like it had been chopped or broken off. Furthermore, closer examination revealed that there was also black, dried-up blood on it!

There was a mirror propped up on the vanity, which was also covered with countless cracks. The strangest thing of all was that... the mirror was the only thing in the room that didn't have even a speck of dust on it!

The dressing room had only a bed, a vanity, and a mirror, nothing else. However, as soon as Bai Xiaochun looked around, he started to tremble violently.

And that was because, as soon as he laid eyes on the vanity... he heard singing!!

It was that same song about the mother whose arm was eaten by her own child!!

He could hear the song with absolute clarity, as though it were being sung in the very room in which he stood.

“Whoever you are, stay put! My apprentice is the Hell-Emperor!!” He felt like he was about to cry, and quickly turned to leave. Apparently, after having left deck 2, he ended up in the very nucleus of the entire ghost galleon!!

This dressing room was where the singing originated!

In fact, it came from the vanity!

Chapter 861: A Woman Combing Her Hair

Bai Xiaochun looked back at the dilapidated vanity, and all of a sudden... he saw a woman!

Her back was to him, making it impossible to see her face. She wore a red gown, and was combing her long, black hair. And she was singing a song....

Shockingly, the woman... only had one arm!!

Along with the woman came a coldness like the depths of winter. Worried that he might shriek with terror and interrupt the woman's singing, Bai Xiaochun clamped his hands down over his mouth.

He couldn't have been more terrified. He could immediately sense that his cultivation base wasn't high enough to fight this woman; she made him feel like he was being crushed by a mountain from the heavens.

Tears welled up in his eyes and then began to drip down his cheeks as he wondered why he always ended up encountering such bizarre situations. He wanted to flee, but after looking around the room, he realized that there were no doors or exits.

"What do I do, what do I do!?" he wailed inwardly. Suddenly, the woman seemed to realize that she wasn't alone, and stopped combing her hair. She also stopped singing.

Bai Xiaochun's heart began to race.

"It's not what you think, Senior!" he blurted. Then he began to gush incoherently. "I didn't mean to interrupt you.... Hey, I'm an important person too. My apprentice is the Hell-Emperor. Do you know the gravekeeper? He sent me here...."

The pressure he felt from this woman actually surpassed that which he had felt from the Celestial.

Worried that he wasn't explaining things clearly enough, he went on to say, "I didn't even want to come here! Don't mind me. You... you sing really well! Very pleasing to the ear...."

It was at this point that the woman turned her face, provoking a shrill scream from Bai Xiaochun!

Her face... had no nose, no eyes, no mouth, nothing!!

It was a complete blank!!

Bai Xiaochun felt like his head was about to explode. Shrieking, he stumbled backward and shoved his command medallion out in front of him. Black light spilled out, causing his vision to blur....

At the same time, he began to fade away, vanishing from within the private cabin!

Even as he reappeared in another location, countless hairs slashed through the air into the spot he had just occupied, causing popping sounds to ring out.

Each and every one of those hairs thrummed with power that surpassed the Deva Realm.

Clearly, if Bai Xiaochun had stayed behind and been hit, he would have been killed!

A moment later, the hairs wriggled and vanished. Meanwhile, the faceless woman at the vanity turned back to face the shattered mirror, and slowly began to comb her hair again... and sing.

When Bai Xiaochun appeared, he was on top of the sea of bones, only about two days away from the eastern delta region of the Heavenspan River.

As he materialized, a blank look could be seen in his eyes. However, that look slowly faded into clarity. Gasping, he looked around to find himself off of the galleon. Everything which had just occurred seemed almost like a hallucination or dream.

And yet, he knew it was no hallucination. Whether it was the

ghost galleon or the faceless woman combing her hair, it had all been very, very real. At this point, he suddenly realized that he had been extremely lucky.

“So, Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper wasn’t lying after all!!” Looking down at the command medallion with lingering fear, he realized that it was the only reason he had escaped death.

“This Deadmire is really an evil place. And what was that ghostess all about!?!?” The mere thought of her caused terror to grip his heart. With that, he slapped his bag of holding to pull out Song Que and Master God-Diviner.

“This was all your fault!” he said. “If it weren’t for me going to save you two, I wouldn’t have been in any danger at all!!”

As soon as Song Que and Master God-Diviner were out in the open, they began to regain their senses.

Rubbing the bridge of his nose, Song Que said, “What happened? We’re out? How come I don’t remember anything...?”

Master God-Diviner hesitated for a moment, then looked quizzically at Bai Xiaochun. “I remember being on the main deck, but after going in the door... I don’t remember anything at all.”

Bai Xiaochun sighed and then told them everything that happened below decks. As he did, their eyes widened, and they even gasped.

Not only was the story completely stunning, they could tell that he wasn’t lying.

“I was the first one to go in?” Song Que asked. Next to him, Master God-Diviner shivered as he heard about the green-skinned, long-fanged ghost face appearing on top of his own face.

Bai Xiaochun snorted and said, “If it weren’t for me, you two would still be on that galleon!”

He was just about to go on berating them for a bit when he

remembered that they were still in the Deadmire.

“Look,” he said hurriedly, “we’ll talk about it more when we’re out of this place. This place is just too evil!” With that, he sped off into the distance, followed by the terrified Song Que and Master God-Diviner.

Considering the speed they maintained, it didn’t take long before they were closing in on the border of the Deadmire. Soon, fewer and fewer bones could be seen, and eventually, Bai Xiaochun was sure that they only had about a day left to go!

“How far did we get when we were on that galleon?” Based on what he recalled, they had only been on the galleon for three or four hours, and yet, it had taken them almost all the way to their destination. Based on that, a quick calculation revealed that the galleon itself could likely traverse the entire Deadmire in only a day.

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As Bai Xiaochun, Song Que and Master God-Diviner were preparing to leave the Deadmire, war broke out in the Middle Reaches of the eastern Heavenspan River!

It was a war in which the three other great sects joined forces against the River-Defying Sect, who was simply incapable of fighting back. It was a war of sect extermination!!

Rumbling booms filled the air in the regions surrounding the River-Defying Sect. A glittering spell formation shield protected the sect, which was powered by the Dire Skybanyan. Countless divine abilities and magical techniques battered the spell formation, which was already twisting and distorting on the verge of collapse!

Outside of the spell formation were two suns, one white and one black, as well as a scarecrow which flitted back and forth. All of that, combined with the power of almost all the disciples of the

River-Defying Sect, ensured that fierce fighting went on everywhere!

However, it was very obvious who had the upper hand. There were more than 100,000 cultivators besieging the sect, who were organized into three armies that attacked from three directions. Each army had a terrifying aura backing it, an aura that seemed to surpass the will of the heavens.

Those auras belonged to powerful experts in the early Deva Realm. They were only Mortal-Dao devas, roughly comparable to Mistress Red-Dust, the type of people Bai Xiaochun would fight without even getting nervous. However, to the River-Defying Sect, they were like insurmountable mountains.

Chapter 862: Dangerously Unstable

Hordes of Blood Stream Division disciples entered the body of the Blood Ancestor and began to power it with their cultivation bases. The patriarchs of the Blood Stream Division were preparing to send the Blood Ancestor into the action!

On top of the Blood Ancestor's head was a rabbit, who stared out at the deva fluctuations on the other side of the spell formation.

The disciples of the Spirit Stream Division did things a bit differently. Depending on which faction of the sect they belonged to, they formed different types of spell formation giants. Enormous swords in hand, the giants fought fiercely beyond the spell formation.

The Pill Stream Division offered auxiliary support, often stepping in to relieve disciples from the Spirit and Blood Stream Divisions. Last was the Profound Stream Division, whose primary task was to ensure that the Dire Skybanyan continued to maintain the spell formation shield.

Because of the vast resources the River-Defying Sect had at its disposal, Song Junwan had already reached the great circle of Core Formation. Currently, her hair was in disarray, and her face smeared with blood. She was clearly in bad shape. Xuemei fought next to her, and was also seriously injured. They were flanked by dozens of guards as they fell back into the protective perimeter of the spell formation, whereupon more disciples rushed over to help them.

“Pill Stream Division,” someone shouted, “get people over here to treat Sect Aunt Song!! Hurry!!”

Song Junwan waved her hand dismissively and said, “I’m fine, take care of Xuemei first!”

Eyes flashing with anger, she refused any help, and instead sat

down cross-legged on one of the leaves of the Dire Skybanyan. As her injuries recovered, she surveyed the battlefield, and her eyes flickered with despair.

Patriarch Limitless of the Blood Stream Division wielded a shining, blood-colored blade that destroyed anything that got in his way. He was actually one of the most powerful patriarchs in the entire River-Defying Sect. However, at the moment, he was being ganged up on by a total of three Nascent Soul patriarchs from the other sects!

Most of the other Nascent Soul patriarchs of the River-Defying Sect were in various locations on the battlefield, fighting fiercely. Because of the spell formation shield, the fighting was somewhat at a deadlock. However, it was easy to imagine what would happen if the spell formation fell. The River-Defying Sect would be crushed as surely as if by Mount Tai!

Sighing, Song Junwan murmured, “Xiaochun... I don’t know if I’ll be able to hold out long enough to see you again....”

Her injuries weren't completely healed, but she was the most powerful expert of the Blood Stream Division’s Middle Peak, and therefore, she was the only one who could wield that peak’s enormous blood sword. There was no time for rest; the fight had to continue!

Each of the Blood Stream Division’s five mountain peaks of the past had all contained powerful precious treasures, and now, they were all being used in the fight. Animated corpses and gargoyles alike were all fighting without mercy!

There was one particular animated corpse with long, green hair, who caused particular frustration for the cultivators of the three sects. That corpse possessed shocking fleshly body power, and could also control other corpses. On top of that, it was being supported by hordes of gargoyles.

Generally speaking, gargoyles weren’t intelligent. However,

there was one particularly wily gargoyle among the group who took it upon himself to lead the gargoyles into battle, making them a very effective fighting force.

As for the Spirit Stream Division, their spell formation giants were mighty, and wreaked havoc among the enemy wherever they went. One of them bore the semblance of Shangguan Tianyou, and another, Beihan Lie. All of them fought with valiance and bravery, and drove the enemy backward constantly.

Spirit beasts of all types howled as they fought alongside the Spirit Stream Division. One of them was an ancient, mighty dragon, who was flanked by a phoenix, a lizard, and a ghost.

Perhaps because of the Spirit Stream Division's impressive showing, the Dao River Court sent three Nascent Soul patriarchs against them, like razor-sharp knives ready to take the heads of anyone they encountered.

However, in the instant that they began their charge, a howl erupted from inside the spell formation that could shake the heavens.

A huge beast appeared, dozens of meters long and growing larger by the moment. He moved as quickly as lightning, and had a sea of flames beneath his feet. As soon as he appeared out in the open, fluctuations rolled out which bordered on the deva level.

The cultivators from the other three sects were all shocked. As for the Nascent Soul experts who had just been preparing to attack the Spirit Stream Division, their eyes went wide, and they turned to flee. However, before they could, that beast pounced on them!

A boom rang out as one of the Nascent Soul experts exploded. His nascent soul flew out into the open, but before it could flee, was consumed by the beast. The other two cultivators were severely injured, and immediately began to retreat.

However, before they could do little more than move, a stream of

sword qi, a huge hand, and a beam of black light shot out from the three sects, and headed toward the beast!

The will of the heavens filled the area: these were deva-level divine abilities!

The beast spun in place, dodging the huge hand and avoiding the black beam of light. Unfortunately, the sword qi slashed right into him!

Blood sprayed out of a wound on his back! In fact, closer examination would reveal that he had many wounds on him already, some which had healed and scarred over, but others which were fresh. Most shocking of all was one of the fresher wounds which went from one side of the beast's neck all the way to the other. It was a sword wound that had clearly been inflicted by the very same sword blast that had just been unleashed.

If the sword which had hit the beast's neck had been moving any faster, it would likely have decapitated him!

Thankfully, the beast was incredibly quick, and was soon back in the safety of the spell formation. He resembled a qilin in some ways, and had large, charming eyes. He was none other than... Bruiser!

Serious expressions could be seen in the eyes of the three deva patriarchs from the three great sects.

“It's him!”

“He's just like the spies described....”

“It took him less than a sixty-year-cycle to reach the deva level.... He's a paragon beast king!!”

“It's too bad he's so fast. In any case, that beast will be mine! He'll either submit, or die!”

Back in the River-Defying Sect's spell formation, the current sect leader, the Spirit Stream Division's Zheng Yuandong, was

anxiously treating Bruiser's wounds.

“Don't go back out into the fighting, Bruiser,” he said. “The only thing we can do is buy time right now. We don't even know if Qinghou is alive or dead, so if something bad happened to you, what would I tell Xiaochun?!” Zheng Yuandong's eyes flickered with sorrow at the sight of all the wounds and scars covering Bruiser.

Bruiser didn't care much about his wounds. However, when Zheng Yuandong brought up Li Qinghou and Bai Xiaochun, he shivered, and grief filled his eyes. His neck wound had come when he had tried to save Li Qinghou, an effort which had failed, and ended with him watching Li Qinghou being taken away to the Dao River Court.

Bai Xiaochun's name caused his eyes to be even more bloodshot. Warm feelings rose in his heart, and at the same time, he remembered how Bai Xiaochun had entrusted him with the job of defending the River-Defying Sect!

Even as he gasped for breath, he cast a hostile glance at the three sects, his eyes glittering with both hatred and fear because of the three devas.

The battle was reaching a fever pitch. It was a war of extermination in which differences could never be resolved. Meanwhile, on the invisible ninth mountain of the River-Defying Sect, Patriarch Spirit Stream stood there with a bitter look on his face. He knew that the three devas were beyond his ability to fight, and that the only reason they were currently holding out was because of the sect's reserve powers. Because the River-Defying Sect had no deva, they had to pull out all the stops to even threaten someone in the early Deva Realm.

Clearly, they were calling upon their reserve powers one by one, and only using them when they were absolutely sure that they would be successful!

“Master, do you think... that a miracle will occur?” Even as the words left Patriarch Spirit Stream’s mouth, a monkey appeared behind him, hands clasped behind his back as he looked off into the distance, wisdom and foresight gleaming in his eyes.

“Definitely!”

Chapter 863: Give It Back

As the River-Defying Sect was being besieged by the three great sects of the Middle Reaches... Bai Xiaochun, Song Que and Master God-Diviner were making their way through the Deadmire, completely unaware of the war. Because of the lingering terror they felt about of the ghost galleon, they flew along as quickly as startled sparrows.

Their journey was almost over; only a few more hours, and they would be free of the Deadmire. There were so few bones down below that they were already able to see patches of dark soil.

Bai Xiaochun couldn't have been more excited. And as for Song Que and Master God-Diviner, the way they had temporarily lost their minds still had them trembling in fear.

However, as they flew along, Bai Xiaochun's face suddenly fell as... he yet again heard that singing echoing in the fog behind them!

The strange sound of it caused everyone's hair to stand on end. Song Que and Master God-Diviner nearly choked from fear.

"Dammit, what is the ghost galleon doing back!?" Scalp tingling with fear, Bai Xiaochun grabbed Song Que and Master God-Diviner and pushed forward at top speed.

This time, they only caught a glimpse of the galleon about 3,000 meters behind them. However, it was still a terrifying moment.

The first time the ghost galleon had appeared to them, it disappeared 3,000 meters away. The fourth time, it teleported them on board. The fact that it had appeared again at 3,000 meters away was something they didn't really want to think about. Furthermore, they had to wonder if they might see the galleon again in the following few hours.

It was a lot of pressure, so much that none of them felt like

talking. Expression grave, Bai Xiaochun put all the energy he could into flying along. After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, though, the singing once again reached their ears.

“What's going on!? Why is it back so soon!?!?” Looking over his shoulder in terror, he saw that the galleon was now 500 meters away. Then it vanished.

Looking at the galleon this time, he realized that there was no way the massive thing only had two decks. At the very least, it probably had five. As for what would happen if they got teleported on board again, not even the gravekeeper's command medallion left him feeling very confident.

There was little need to mention Song Que and Master God-Diviner, whose hearts were pounding with anxiety.

“Hold on a second,” Bai Xiaochun muttered, “something is off here!” Unfortunately, there was no time to ponder the situation. Heart as taught as a bowstring, he continued to flee, feeling more under pressure than ever. Song Que and Master God-Diviner were actually more nervous than Bai Xiaochun.

After enough time passed for half an incense stick to burn, the galleon appeared again. And this time it was only 300 meters away!!

The corpses pulling the galleon led it directly toward Bai Xiaochun, and this time, it didn't seem at all like the galleon was going to fade away. In fact, as it barreled toward them, the three flags on the cabin flapped, and the green-skinned, long-fanged ghost face suddenly began to laugh noiselessly.

Despair filled Bai Xiaochun's eyes, and yet, that was when he happened to look at the cabin door. When he did, his eyes went wide, and an idea popped into his head. Considering the danger they were in, he didn't hesitate to follow through on the idea. Turning to Master God-Diviner, he shouted, “Master God-Diviner, give back that eight trigrams mirror you took!!”

As soon as Song Que heard Bai Xiaochun's words, he thought back to how Master God-Diviner had taken the mirror, and immediately yelled similar words.

There was no time for Master God-Diviner to even worry about how much it pained him. He quickly pulled the eight trigrams mirror out of his bag of holding and hurled it at the huge galleon with all the force he could muster.

The mirror became a beam of light that shot directly toward the galleon and, in a very strange coincidence, perhaps because of some unknown power, landed in the exact spot where it had been taken from!

When that happened, the three wildly flapping flags all suddenly drooped down motionless, and the green-skinned, long-fanged face on the middle flag let out a noiseless howl of defiance.

At the same time, the countless corpses and the ghost galleon itself all faded away into the fog.

Bai Xiaochun, Song Que and Master God-Diviner all looked back jumpily to confirm that the galleon was finally gone, whereupon they breathed sighs of relief. Then, Song Que spun and angrily grabbed Master God-Diviner.

"You nearly got us killed!!" he shouted.

"What are you yelling for!" Master God-Diviner shot back, his voice quavering a bit. "It's not like I did it on purpose.... Who knew that ghost galleon would be so stingy? It took my copper coin, so I took the mirror in exchange, that's all...." As he spoke, his voice became quieter and quieter until it faded away.

Bai Xiaochun wiped the sweat from his brow. It had been a very dangerous close call, and if he hadn't thought to remind Master God-Diviner about the mirror, then all three of them would likely have been dragged on board the galleon, never to return.

Glancing at the angry Song Que and the dispirited Master God-

Diviner, he said, “Alright, enough is enough. Let’s worry about it after we’re out of this place!”

Then he blurred into motion. Song Que gave Master God-Diviner another good glare, then let him go and followed. As for Master God-Diviner, he rubbed his nose in embarrassment and joined them.

The galleon never returned. An hour later, not a single bone could be seen beneath their feet. They shot out of the mountains, and were in another world. All of them felt as if a big weight had just been lifted from their shoulders.

As of this moment, they knew... that they were out of the Deadmire!

“Finally free!” Master God-Diviner whooped. Song Que took a long, deep breath of fresh air. As for Bai Xiaochun, he looked around at the lush vegetation and smiled. There were no vicious plants or terrifying creatures like back in the Wildlands. It almost looked like a celestial paradise, complete with singing birds and blooming flowers.

Off in the distance, a charming, deer-like animal suddenly looked up at the three of them, and then sprang off into the trees.

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased with what he could see. Furthermore, there was something here that was very different from the Wildlands.... Spiritual power from the Heavenspan Sea!!

Although it was faint, it was indescribably stronger than in the Wildlands. He took a deep breath, and cracking sounds filled him as his energy-starved body was repaired.

“Ah, spiritual energy. It’s been a long time since I could absorb it so freely.” He had been in the Wildlands for so many years that he had almost forgotten what the Heavenspan River region looked like. Even here in the delta region, it was still a wonderful place.

Master God-Diviner and Song Que both shivered at the sensation

of spiritual energy, and complicated emotions could be seen in their eyes.

“We’re back!” Song Que said.

“River-Defying Sect, here we come!!” Master God-Diviner said loudly.

Laughing heartily, Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, sending a flying airship out into the open. It was something he had acquired long ago in the River-Defying Sect, but which didn't work in the Wildlands because of the lack of spiritual energy. “Hahaha! Que’er, Master Snortsnort, my genius has done it again. I'm going... to take you home!”

Now that the ship had access to spiritual energy, it began to shine with brilliant light. Bai Xiaochun leaped up and took the helm. In rare fashion, Song Que didn’t bristle at all because Bai Xiaochun had called him Que’er. He was simply too excited to get back to the River-Defying Sect, and shot like an arrow onto the airship.

Master God-Diviner reacted similarly. Moments later, Bai Xiaochun sent his near-deva-level cultivation base power into the ship, and it sped through the air until it was over the horizon!

Chapter 864: Wont Count For Crap!

The airship moved so quickly through the delta region that it left sonic booms behind it as it flew along.

The sound startled countless beasts, many of whom flew up into the air to investigate. However, when they sensed the cultivation base fluctuations coming from Bai Xiaochun and the others, they immediately retracted their auras and went into hiding.

As for the cultivators who occupied the sects in the delta, they wouldn't even dare to provoke the animals in the area, let alone Bai Xiaochun and his party.

The delta sect cultivators trembled in fear, and a few of them went out to offer formal greetings as the airship passed.

All of them could tell that the ship was being piloted by someone of incredible power and status, whose cultivation base fluctuations left them feeling deeply shocked.

A few hours passed, and the airship was approaching the Lower Reaches.

Bai Xiaochun felt like every tree and every bush was familiar to him. After all, his path in life had begun in the delta area close to the Spirit Stream Sect.

When he was finally in Spirit Stream Sect territory, everything felt even more familiar. He saw the Heavenspan River, and he saw a mountain-sized giant laying there, who was awoken by his passage!

The giant's eyes opened, and he was about start howling when he sensed Bai Xiaochun's aura, whereupon he closed his mouth, shivered, and put his head down.

Bai Xiaochun recognized that giant, whom he had seen when he left the Spirit Stream Sect on a training mission all those years ago. Back then, he had been very cautious about the giant, but now, he

could see that its battle prowess was only around the Nascent Soul level.

However, the blood of Wildlands savages ran in its veins, which, in combination with the energy of the Heavenspan River, allowed it to grow very large.

“Hahaha! I'm so much more powerful now!” he thought, feeling very pleased with himself. As they sped through the territory that had once belonged to the Spirit Stream Sect, Song Que and Master God-Diviner were extremely excited. They were almost jumping up and down in anticipation of getting back to the River-Defying Sect.

Before long, Bai Xiaochun actually caught sight of the Luo Chen Mountains!!

Emotions roiled up in his heart, but they quickly passed as he focused on the road ahead. Spirit Stream Sect territory had once seemed like an enormous place, but with his current cultivation base, it wasn't very large at all.

It only took about two hours... to go from one end of Spirit Stream Sect territory to another. It was at this point that Bai Xiaochun began to frown. Something seemed off.

Song Que also noticed the same thing. Frowning, he said, “What's going on? There were cultivators in the delta. How come nobody's around here in the Lower Reaches? I haven't seen a single person!”

Master God-Diviner's eyes widened. Unfortunately, without his copper coin, his divinations weren't very effective, and didn't provide any information. Suspicions built as they finally reached the location of the Spirit Stream Sect's former headquarters!

When Bai Xiaochun caught sight of the mountains on both banks of the river, he was shocked to see that the sect's defensive spell formation was active!

Numerous cultivators could be seen inside, many of them

disciples that had been left behind by the River-Defying Sect because of their low cultivation bases. Their charge was to protect the foundation of the Spirit Stream Sect!

The Blood Stream Sect, Pill Stream Sect and Profound Stream Sect had all done the same thing. The disciples left behind were supposed to guard the foundation of the four divisions of the River-Defying Sect, and also serve as a place to groom new disciples.

But right now, the Spirit Stream Sect seemed like they were anticipating the arrival of a major enemy. Bai Xiaochun's heart immediately began to pound. As for Song Que and Master God-Diviner, they were from the Blood Stream Sect, but they could well imagine that similar circumstances were playing out there.

As the airship approached, the disciples of the Spirit Stream Sect looked up with vigilant expressions on their faces.

There were a few disciples in the Core Formation level who flew up out of the crowd and gave instructions to strengthen the spell formation. The one who was clearly in a leadership position was a middle-aged man who was in mid Core Formation. He seemed weak, perhaps even sick, as he anxiously sized up the airship.

It looked familiar to him, and he quickly identified it as having come from the River-Defying Sect. But the River-Defying Sect... was not in the position to be sending out airships right now. Therefore, his vigilance did not lessen.

Bai Xiaochun instantly recognized that middle-aged man. "Big Bro Hou!"

This man was none other than Bai Xiaochun's Elder Brother Hou Yunfei, who was the older brother of Hou Xiaomei!!

Without the slightest hesitation, Bai Xiaochun leapt off of the airship.

When his voice reached the ears of the disciples in the spell

formation, their jaws dropped. Hou Yunfei looked especially surprised. He stared at Bai Xiaochun for a long moment, and the incredulity in his eyes grew. Then he shouted, “Bai Xiaochun!!”

The other Core Formation cultivators were clearly shocked. Although the name ‘Bai Xiaochun’ sounded familiar to them, neither they nor any of the other disciples in the Spirit Stream Sect were quite sure what was happening.

Even as everyone looked on in confusion, Bai Xiaochun took a step forward, blurring for a moment and then reappearing inside the spell formation, right in front of Hou Yunfei!

The spell formation hadn’t hindered him in the least. It may as well have not existed.

The Core Formation cultivators all braced themselves for an imminent attack, and all the other disciples waited nervously. Bai Xiaochun's actions just now had been very shocking, to say the least.

“Xiaochun, it's really you!!” Hou Yunfei said loudly. As he looked Bai Xiaochun over, his excitement began to build as he realized he couldn’t assess his cultivation base. All he could tell was that the fluctuations seemed even more shocking than those of Patriarch Spirit Stream, whom he had met in person in the past.

Bai Xiaochun was very excited at being able to see such a close friend after all these years, and was just about to begin talking, when Hou Yunfei suddenly said, “Xiaochun, what’s the level of your cultivation base?!”

“Huh? Uh, the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage....” Even as the words left his mouth, Song Que and Master God-Diviner flew off of the aircraft to hover in the air.

An excited expression appeared on Hou Yunfei’s face, only to be replaced by a bitter smile. “You need to get away from here, Xiaochun. Don’t stay here, and don’t go to the River-Defying Sect.

Get as far away from the eastern Heavenspan River as you can.”

Bai Xiaochun’s face fell, and his heart began to pound. “What happened?!”

Hou Yunfei shook his head bitterly. He knew that he couldn't keep the information from Bai Xiaochun. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun’s status in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect actually gave Hou Yunfei a bit of hope. After a moment of hesitation, he explained the danger the River-Defying Sect was in!

When Bai Xiaochun heard that the three great sects had joined forces to try to exterminate the River-Defying Sect, his eyes turned crimson, and his killing intent began to burn. Trembling, he flew out of the spell formation and back to the airship. Ignoring Song Que and Master God-Diviner, he unleashed the full power of his cultivation base to send the airship speeding... toward the River-Defying Sect!

“Xiaochun!!” Hou Yunfei shouted, but he was too late. Bai Xiaochun moved so quickly that he was gone in the blink of an eye. As for Song Que and Master God-Diviner, when they heard what Hou Yunfei had just said, expressions of madness appeared on their faces, and they also began to fly in the direction of the River-Defying Sect.

As they sped off, Master God-Diviner turned to Hou Yunfei and, aware of his close relationship with Bai Xiaochun, yelled, “Elder Brother Hou, don’t worry. Once Bai Xiaochun gets there, those three sects... won't count for crap!”

Chapter 865: How Dare You People!

“But they have three devas!” Hou Yunfei said remorsefully.

“Three... devas?” Master God-Diviner replied, suddenly not so convinced.

However, that was when Song Que turned back and said, “As long as they aren’t in the late stage, Bai Xiaochun will demolish them!”

Few people knew how terrifying and powerful Bai Xiaochun had become in the Wildlands. In fact, even Master God-Diviner assumed that most of the stories Bai Xiaochun had told him were exaggerations. But Song Que was different. Although he didn’t know every single detail about how powerful Bai Xiaochun was, he had a fairly good idea.

His father-in-law was a demigod, and his apprentice was the Hell-Emperor. In Arch-Emperor City, he had fought bitterly with devas, and had made enemies of the entire nobility and aristocracy. Not only did he come out of all of that unscathed, but his cultivation base had climbed the entire time. A person like that... couldn’t possibly be afraid of three little devas.

Besides, Song Que had seen Bai Xiaochun fighting Mistress Red-Dust. Although neither of them had been using full force, considering that Song Que himself was in the Nascent Soul stage, he could easily tell that Bai Xiaochun’s battle prowess surpassed that stage, and made him equivalent to a deva!

After all, Mistress Red-Dust was a chosen in the Wildlands, the daughter of the Giant Ghost King, and very close to the mid Deva Realm!

Although Song Que still didn't like Bai Xiaochun very much, the urgency in Hou Yunfei’s voice was very telling. Song Que knew what to say and how to say it, and therefore it was with iron

determination that he spoke his words of confidence. In response, all hearts were shaken, and many eyes went wide with incredulity!

To these people... devas were paramount entities in all creation, people who could shake heaven and earth, and crush all opponents!

“That’s right,” Master God-Diviner added. “As long as Bai Xiaochun gets there in time, he’ll fix everything!” With that, he turned and raced after Song Que in the direction of the River-Defying Sect.

Back in the Spirit Stream Sect’s spell formation, Hou Yunfei’s mind rang with the words Song Que had just spoken. On the one hand, he was sure that Bai Xiaochun wouldn’t do anything rash. But at the same time, he could see that Song Que was already in the Nascent Soul stage, and yet didn’t seem fazed at all by how Bai Xiaochun seemed to view the three mighty devas of the Middle Reaches. However, it was still difficult to believe.

“Is it real...?” Hou Yunfei thought. It was roughly at this time that one of the other Core Formation cultivators suddenly started, his eyes going as wide as saucers.

“I remember now! That... that was the legendary... Bai Xiaochun!! I heard that a whole bunch of spirit tail chickens went missing because of him!”

“Heavens, I remember now too! That was Bai Xiaochun?!?! 10,000 Snakes Valley is completely empty because of him!”

“He was the one who combined the four great sects into the River-Defying Sect! He’s the soul and the hope of the River-Defying Sect, their number one chosen.... He was eventually taken as a hostage to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, where he went to the Great Wall and became a major general! Eventually he went missing in the Wildlands.... Bai Xiaochun!”

More exclamations of shock could be heard. Before long, all of

the disciples of the Spirit Stream Sect began thinking about that familiar name, and recalled the various stories they had heard about him. After all, Bai Xiaochun was still very famous in the Spirit Stream Sect.

His deeds were retold almost like myths among the new, low-ranking disciples.

Even as the disciples of the Spirit Stream Sect reeled in shock, Bai Xiaochun was flying through the air toward the River-Defying Sect, moving with incredible speed, his eyes bloodshot and his breath coming in ragged pants.

“Uncle Li. Elder Brother Sect Leader. Patriarch Spirit Stream. Patriarch Blood Stream.... Hang in there, all of you!! Junwan. Xiaomei.... Bruiser....” Countless faces flashed through his head, causing his madness to increase. At the moment, he wasn’t thinking at all about matters of life and death. Although he feared dying, he would never run for his life when his sect was in peril.

Back when he was young and powerless, the sect had protected him. But now... he qualified to protect the sect!

Because he didn’t have to worry about Song Que and Master God-Diviner being injured by the process, he was capable of adding teleportations to his movements, lending him even greater speed.

Rumbling booms filled the air as he relied on teleportation after teleportation!

The result was shocking speed which surpassed anything ordinary devas were capable of. Not even someone in the mid Deva Realm would be able to achieve it.

He was soon closing in on the border between the Lower Reaches and the Middle Reaches, and beyond it... the River-Defying Sect!

The situation was bad in the River-Defying Sect. The glow of magical technique rose high in the sky, and rumbling booms echoed far and wide. The army of 100,000 cultivators from the

other three sects was pushing the offensive hard from three directions.

The River-Defying Sect simply wasn't a match. They were forced to fall back over and over again, relying on their spell formation to hold out. Even still, casualties mounted.

The sect itself was like a wounded giant who only had a bit of energy left to keep fighting!

The spell formation shield cast by the Dire Skybanyan was heavily damaged, constantly distorting, and filled with rapidly spreading cracks.

With every new crack that appeared, the Profound Stream Division disciples who powered the formation would cough up mouthfuls of blood. And yet, howling, they would hold nothing back to repair and sustain the formation.

Unfortunately, despite their efforts, it didn't seem like the shield would hold out for more than the time it takes an incense stick to burn.

The disciples of the Pill Stream Division were so exhausted they were hovering on the brink of collapse. And yet, they continued to roam the battlefield both inside and outside the spell formation, healing disciples from the other divisions, and occasionally getting involved in deadly conflicts themselves.

The Spirit and Blood Stream Divisions had it most bitter of all. They were the powerhouses of the River-Defying Sect, and took the brunt of the attacks. Less than thirty percent of the Spirit Stream Division's spell formation giants still stood, and those disciples who powered the remaining giants were spattered with blood.

Shangguan Tianyou's eyes were bloodshot, but he had many kills to his name. Beihan Lie was in similar condition; tears flowed from his eyes as he howled in savage fashion.

The disciples of the Spirit Stream Division were fighting with full madness. The Blood Stream Division was in a similar state. Animated corpses, gargoyles, and even the blood masters, all had suffered casualties!

Only the blood sword from Middle Peak remained strong. Song Junwan, Master Limitless and Xuemei led the fight against their enemies, and did their best to save whatever fellow disciples they could.

Song Junwan was exhausted and seriously wounded. She had consumed numerous medicinal pills provided by the Pill Stream Division, and yet, was reaching the limits of her ability to endure. Despair had already begun to shine in her eyes.

The scarecrow had been destroyed. The black and white suns had been crushed, the crows inside of them killed. The old dragon was gasping for breath. Only Bruiser continued to fight viciously, breaking holes in the enemy lines left and right.

In the Nascent Soul battles, the River-Defying Sect had been defeated at every turn. Unable to hold their own when it came to one-on-one battles, the Nascent Soul experts stayed in groups, and inflicted as many casualties as possible on the enemy.

From a distance, the armies of the three great sects were like three enormous hands crushing down onto the River-Defying Sect. High up in the sky, the fluctuations of the three devas caused heaven and earth to shake violently.

“Their spell formation will fall shortly....”

“We can’t let things drag out any longer. There were differing opinions back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. If we don’t secure victory soon, something unexpected could happen.”

“At this point, why don’t the three of us just attack? We can destroy the spell formation, and then... wipe the River-Defying Sect off the map for good!”

After a bit more discussion, their eyes began to shine, and they attacked! A destructive stream of sword qi, a massive hand, and a black thundercloud all shot toward the spell formation!

The speed of the attacks left the River-Defying Sect in despair. When they slammed into the Dire Skybanyan's spell formation, it held out for only a moment before collapsing!

In response, the enemy army shouted in delight and then charged forward in attack. The River-Defying Sect was immediately shoved backward across the battlefield. Worse, the three devas shot toward the sect, with only Bruiser to stand in their way.

It was at this point that the Blood Ancestor's eyes opened, and he leaped into action. He was joined by a rabbit, a monkey, and Patriarch Spirit Stream! They were going all out to defend the sect!

Everyone was in critical danger!

The disciples of the Spirit and Blood Stream Divisions were being shoved backward by the enemy forces, their faces covered with despair. Five Nascent Soul cultivators were closing in on Song Junwan, hoping to destroy her blood sword, and then kill both her and Master Limitless!

Song Junwan smiled bitterly at the sight of the five Nascent Soul enemies. Master Limitless was coughing up blood and could hardly defend himself. At this point, both of them knew that they were about to die.... However, that was when a voice rang out that caused heaven to shake and the earth to tremble. The clouds churned, and a thunderous roar filled the entire battlefield.

“How dare you people!!”

Chapter 866: Its Bai Xiaochun!

Virtually the entire Middle Reaches began to shake because of the voice. Countless embattled cultivators felt their minds reeling. Before anyone could react, Bruiser suddenly shivered, then threw his head back and let out a howl of joy.

Song Junwan's jaw dropped, and the despair of death that had existed in her eyes was replaced by incredulity. She suddenly turned to look at the horizon, where an airship was speeding through the air, with a person just barely visible on the deck!

Of course, a battlefield with tens upon tens of thousands of combatants would obviously be filled with shocking levels of noise. Therefore, Bai Xiaochun's voice was like a rock dropped into a lake, which only sent a few ripples out. The enemy forces didn't take it very seriously.

In fact, a group of several hundred cultivators from the three sects spun and then began to fly toward Bai Xiaochun to block his path. Two in that group were Nascent Soul cultivators, who closed in on him from two different directions.

Even Song Junwan, after her initial excitement, came to the conclusion that Bai Xiaochun wouldn't make much of a difference in the fight. Furthermore, the five Nascent Soul cultivators who had been closing in, after their initial pause, snorted coldly and pressed the attack. Two of them focused on Master Limitless, and three on Song Junwan!

Because she wielded Middle Peak's blood sword, Song Junwan was able to fight back against Nascent Soul experts. Furthermore, she led a group of Middle Peak disciples who were adept at sword formations that could inflict injuries on anyone under the Nascent Soul stage.

They were a formidable force that the enemy disciples knew they had to completely crush before they could proceed onward into the

sect headquarters.

The three Nascent Soul experts who were targeting Song Junwan closed in with immense speed. Even at peak condition, the Middle Peak disciples that Song Junwan commanded wouldn't be able to stop them. Therefore, they could only watch helplessly as Song Junwan... was put in imminent life-or-death danger!

No one was capable of turning the situation around....

When Bai Xiaochun saw what was happening, and realized what critical danger the River-Defying Sect was in, he was gripped with uncontrollable madness. Eyes crimson, he pushed the airship forward with such speed that it began to burn up. Then, he slammed into the group of hundreds of disciples who were besieging Song Junwan.

Rumbling booms echoed out. Of those hundreds of disciples, none could even get close to Bai Xiaochun. In fact, because of the intense flames which surrounded the airship, the entire group was instantly transformed into ash, killed in body and soul!

The airship shot through the sky like a deadly sword, crushing anything in its path as it descended toward the ground.

No one could block it, or even get close to it. Any who tried to were wiped out of existence! And then... he arrived right in the middle of the battlefield, next to the Blood Stream Division and Song Junwan!

He moved so quickly that he arrived just when the three Nascent Soul experts were bearing down on Song Junwan. Before they could actually unleash their attacks, an ear-piercing sound assaulted their ears. Two of them were in the early Nascent Soul stage, and one in the mid stage. They only had time to turn their heads, whereupon they saw nothing but the image of an enormous, burning airship.

The airship didn't slow down at all. It slammed into the three

Nascent Soul experts, a destructive force that didn't even allow them to cry out in pain. They were engulfed by flame and force, and transformed into nothing more than ash!

The two cultivators who had been focusing on Master Limitless coughed up blood. Expressions of disbelief appeared on their faces, and their eyes nearly bulged out of their skulls as they began to fall back.

Bai Xiaochun strode out from the flaming wreckage of the airship to appear in front of Song Junwan. Wrapping his arm around her waist, he waved his hand, isolating nearly a thousand streams of destructive power that had been unleashed by the destroyed airship. Then he sent those streams of destruction smashing into anyone in the area who wasn't a member of the River-Defying Sect.

Not even the two Nascent Soul cultivators could escape, and were enveloped by pure death.

Miserable screams erupted onto the battlefield as thousands of cultivators were engulfed by flames, and then burned down to ash!

Although all of this takes a bit of time to describe, it happened in the briefest of moments. It took only the blink of an eye for Bai Xiaochun to kill five Nascent Soul experts, and thousands of other cultivators.

It happened so quickly that nobody could even react. Shock immediately began to spread across the battlefield, and countless gazes shifted to focus on Bai Xiaochun.

After an initial hush, the cultivators from the three sects began to gasp and cry aloud.

“Heavens!! What just happened!?”

“Dammit, who is that?!?!?”

“He looks familiar....”

As the enemy cultivators reacted in shock, the River-Defying Sect

disciples began to cry out loud in excitement.

“Bai Xiaochun! It’s Bai Xiaochun!!”

“Sect Uncle Bai! It's Sect Uncle Bai!!”

“Bai Xiaochun!!”

Before long, everyone was crying Bai Xiaochun’s name. Shangguan Tianyou, Beihan Lie, Patriarch Spirit Stream, Patriarch Blood Stream, the monkey, the rabbit, and countless other people were shaken to the core.

Powerful experts who had once been chosen in the three sects were now pillars of their respective organizations. Hatred existed in their eyes, for on their faces and other body parts... existed the mark of a turtle!

The three deva patriarchs all wore frowns, but at the moment, didn’t have time to deal with Bai Xiaochun. Although they were shocked by his sudden appearance on the battlefield, and his unusual battle prowess, they were still confident... that he was only in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage.

“Ignore him. Once we destroy the foundation of the River-Defying Sect, then we can kill him!” Having made their mutual decision, the three devas looked away from Bai Xiaochun and continued on with their original plan.

Patriarch Starry River was the one using the sky-obfuscating hand to unleash crushing power onto Patriarch Spirit Stream, the monkey, the rabbit, and the Blood Ancestor.

Patriarch Dao River bristled with sword qi, and his eyes glittered with greed as he eyed Bruiser!

Then there was Patriarch Polarity River, beneath whose feet roiled a black cloud. Under his destructive attacks, the main entrance to the River-Defying Sect was already on the verge of being reduced to ruins!

Those three devas had already surpassed the will of the heavens, causing the sky to vibrate and the clouds to churn.

Song Junwan was deeply shaken as she looked up at Bai Xiaochun, her mouth hanging open, but no words coming out. She felt like she was dreaming.

There were a million things Bai Xiaochun wanted to say to her, but currently, it was a moment of grave crisis for the sect, and there was no time. Waving his hand, he summoned a shimmering shield to surround her, something that not even a deva would be able to break through. Then, he looked over at the three devas who were unleashing unbridled destructive power onto the River-Defying Sect. He knew that they were the key to everything. If he could crush them, the tide of battle would be turned!

“They’re only in the early Deva Realm. How dare they behave rudely in front of me!” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were completely bloodshot, especially when he saw all of the streams of sword qi surrounding Patriarch Dao River, and how he was trying so hard to cut down Bruiser. Bai Xiaochun opened his Heavenspan Dharma Eye, sending violet light spilling out. Then, he blurred into motion, moving faster than lightning in the direction of the sect headquarters itself.

Chapter 867: Fleshly Body Destruction!

Bruiser was there in the sect headquarters, bursting with excitement despite the danger he currently faced. His enthusiasm even seemed to give him an extra burst of power, and yet, he knew how to refrain from being impulsive. The black sea of flames beneath his feet roared to life, surrounding him as he backed away from the fighting.

At the same time, Patriarch Dao River performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, causing the sword qi around him to converge into the shape of an illusory greatsword, which thrummed with the will of the heavens as it slashed toward Bruiser!

Patriarch Dao River didn't deign to pay any attention to Bai Xiaochun, nor the violet beam of light that shot out from his third eye. The man simply waved his sleeve, sending a portion of sword qi out to intercept it.

However, the instant the sword qi touched the violet light, the sword qi shattered, completely incapable of standing up to the violet light. Shocked, Patriarch Dao River tried to back up, but couldn't avoid the light. It latched onto him, and instantly took control of his body.

His face fell, and his heart began to pound as Bai Xiaochun blurred to a stop... right in front of Bruiser!

Bruiser let out an excited howl, unable to prevent the joy from burning in his eyes. Bai Xiaochun was essentially Bruiser's father, someone who could solve any problems!

Bruiser depended on Bai Xiaochun in the way that only relatives could!

Bai Xiaochun immediately let out a shout, shoving his right fist out toward the greatsword. When Patriarch Dao River saw that, he

immediately relaxed a bit, and his eyes began to shine with coldness.

“This violet light is strange, but this kid is too young and inexperienced. I can’t believe he didn’t take the opportunity to try to injure me. For him to make contact with my incisive sword qi is simply courting--” However, before he could even finish his inner monologue, his eyes bulged as surely as if he had seen a ghost.

When the sword qi in which he had placed so much confidence struck Bai Xiaochun’s fist, a popping sound could be heard, and the sword qi shattered!

It couldn’t have collapsed more surely if it had encountered a metal wall. As for Bai Xiaochun, he wasn’t harmed at all as the remnants of the sword qi scattered in all directions.

Patriarch Dao River shivered and gasped. The fact that Bai Xiaochun wasn’t harmed at all by power comparable to the will of the heavens was shocking, to say the least.

“You’re a deva too!!” he blurted. When the people in the area heard that, they were immediately shaken, and looked over with disbelieving eyes. As for the River-Defying Sect disciples, their excitement began to mount.

Inside the Blood Ancestor, Patriarch Spirit Stream and Patriarch Blood Stream were both delightedly shocked, as was the monkey. In contrast, Patriarch Starry River and Patriarch Polarity River were both shaken, and their killing intent grew more pronounced.

“Have a death wish?!” Bai Xiaochun growled, his eyes completely bloodshot because of all the wounds and scars he could see on Bruiser, especially that vicious neck wound. Howling in rage, he shot toward Patriarch Dao River.

Patriarch Dao River’s heart sank. However, he was a deva. It didn’t matter that he was only in the Mortal-Dao level, he was still proud and arrogant. Therefore, he performed an incantation

gesture with both hands, causing more streams of sword qi to erupt out. Numerous greatswords appeared, fully 100,000 of them, which then descended onto Bai Xiaochun like rain.

Any one of those swords could seriously injure a Nascent Soul cultivator. They contained Patriarch Dao River's will, which surpassed that of the heavens, and also contained a huge convergence of the energy of heaven and earth. His goal was obviously to kill Bai Xiaochun as quickly as possible.

Meanwhile, Patriarchs Starry River and Polarity River began to rush over to help cut this cocky Bai Xiaochun down to size!

As the two other patriarchs took to motion, Patriarch Dao River's 100,000 greatswords bore down on Bai Xiaochun.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he strode forward, unleashing the explosive fleshly body power of the great circle of the Undying Bones! With that power, he utilized... the Mountain Shaking Bash!!

It was an incredible level of energy that caused heaven to shake and the earth to rumble. He shot forward with blinding speed, looking very much like a vicious beast from primordial times.

The air shattered around him as he moved, and to the shock of Patriarch Dao River, he was right in front of him before the rain of swords could even land!

A boom rang out, and blood sprayed from Patriarch Dao River's mouth. He tried to fall back, but before he could, Bai Xiaochun took advantage of the momentum he had built up to reach out with this thumb and index finger. Black light flashed, along with a powerful gravitational force.

It was none other than... the Throat Crushing Grasp!

A tremor passed through the retreating patriarch, and his eyes lit with terror as Bai Xiaochun closed in on his neck with lightning-like speed.

It was a critical moment, and Patriarch Dao River had no time to

ponder what to do. It wasn't that he had never fought with other devas before; it was that he had never encountered someone as shockingly fast as Bai Xiaochun. He seemed brutal, as though he had veins of steel that made him willing to die fighting with his enemy. It was a madness that seemed bereft of any and all reason. And yet, at the same time, there was something crafty and intelligent within his killing intent, something that was like battle instinct!

The massive waves of shock that battered at Patriarch Dao River's mind caused him to gasp loudly. Patriarchs Starry River and Polarity River had no time to offer backup. Roaring, Patriarch Dao River sent the 100,000 greatswords swirling through the air to try to block Bai Xiaochun.

As the rain of swords closed in, Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered, and he completely ignored them! Instead, he dashed forward, reached out, and grabbed the patriarch's right arm. Then, he squeezed down!

The shocking power of the Throat Crushing Grasp caused cracking sounds to fill the air as the deva's arm was ripped to shreds! His entire arm was completely destroyed!

A shrill scream escaped his lips, and his face turned ashen. Madness lit up his eyes, and yet, within that madness was shock; this was the most powerful enemy he had encountered since becoming a deva!

All of a sudden, he had no desire to fight Bai Xiaochun one-on-one. Taking a deep breath, he burned longevity to power a secret magic that propelled him backward at incredible speed.

However, in the moment that he took to motion, Bai Xiaochun unhesitatingly utilized his Undying Hex. Everything in the world suddenly slowed down, with the exception of himself. Then, he burst into motion as he chased after the fleeing Patriarch Dao River!

What everyone else saw was Bai Xiaochun seemingly moving faster than sound as he pursued the patriarch!

He caught up in the briefest of moments, whereupon he clenched his hand into a fist and then punched out with deva-level fleshly body power, adding in energy from his cultivation base.

Blood sprayed out of the deva's mouth as his chest caved in. His life force was fading rapidly, and his expression was one of complete terror. He immediately began to contemplate other ways to flee.

As of this moment, he could clearly sense... the shadow of death!!

Patriarchs Starry River and Polarity River were urgently rushing over, but Bai Xiaochun had attacked with such unbelievable speed that they still hadn't arrived. Unfortunately, they were very close. Realizing that, Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered, and a tremendous burst of frigid qi appeared, filling everything within a 3,000-meter area!

It was like a frigid lake, or... a frigid domain! Furthermore, within that domain... appeared nine projections of Bai Xiaochun!

They shot like lightning toward Patriarch Dao River, and before he could do anything, pierced through him multiple times, provoking a bloodcurdling scream!

Booms rang out as the patriarch's head flew through the air, and the rest of his body exploded. He remained in existence only in nascent divinity form, utilizing a secret magic and other life-saving magical items to evade destruction. Flickering weakly, and screaming in terror the entire time, he flew away, leaving behind the shattered remnants of his fleshly body.

Chapter 868: To Battle!

Bai Xiaochun knew that he couldn't chase Patriarch Dao River any further at the moment. Snorting coldly, he sent the nine projections of himself down to the battlefield below.

Wherever they went, they cut down their enemies with impunity. The Nascent Soul cultivators were especially targeted, and it only took a short time for roughly ten to be slaughtered.

That was the limit of Bai Xiaochun's frigid domain when in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage. He could create multiple powerful projections, but they could only last for so long.

And yet, it had only taken a few short breaths of time for him to cut down more than a dozen Nascent Soul experts on the battlefield below, and also destroy Patriarch Dao River's fleshly body, leaving him fleeing in nascent divinity form.

Everyone felt as shaken as if they had been struck by numerous bolts of lightning.

"This is impossible!!"

"Patriarch, this... how... how could this be happening?!?!"

"What's the level of his cultivation base? It only took a few breaths of time for him to cut down multiple Nascent Soul experts, and even defeat a deva!!" The cultivators from the three sects were completely astonished, and were trembling in disbelieving fear. To see Bai Xiaochun handily defeat the deva patriarch from the Dao River Court, who then ran away like a stray dog, left them on the verge of collapsing mentally.

That was especially true of the cultivators from the Dao River Court, who were the most terrified of all.

In the past, Bai Xiaochun had marked all of the chosen from these three sects with turtle marks. Now, he had them shaking in terror, hardly able to believe what they were seeing.... The fact

that their patriarch had almost been killed, and fled in bedraggled fashion, proved that... Bai Xiaochun was now unimaginably powerful!

The morale of the three sects' cultivators was dropping rapidly. In contrast, the cultivators of the River-Defying Sect began to cheer at the tops of their lungs.

They simply couldn't control their excitement. The River-Defying Sect had been under great pressure for too long. For years, they had been bullied by the other three sects, even when disciples went out for training. The friction had become so bad that some disciples had been killed in the resulting conflicts.

Unfortunately, the River-Defying Sect just wasn't strong enough. For the sake of the bigger picture, in the hopes of preventing things from escalating too quickly, and especially to avoid giving the three sects an excuse to attack, they had simply endured.

But despite how they had endured, the three sects had managed to get tacit approval from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to exterminate the River-Defying Sect. And therefore, the hatred the River-Defying Sect disciples felt toward the three sects had reached an unimaginable degree. They simply couldn't exist under the same sky together.

Now, a mighty deva patriarch had been beaten and sent running. It was so exciting that the River-Defying Sect disciples couldn't contain themselves. Most important was Bai Xiaochun. He was the spirit and heart of the River-Defying Sect; he had even come up with the name of the sect! He was their pride and joy, someone who truly deserved to be referred to as a consummate chosen!

“Sect Grandfather Bai!”

“Sect Grandfather Bai!!”

“Sect Grandfather Bai!!!”

It was hard to say who called it out first, but soon everyone in the

River-Defying Sect was shouting the same thing, creating sound waves that rolled out in all directions.

Song Junwan was completely swept up in the excitement. To see Bai Xiaochun standing right here in front of her was like a dream that caused tears of joy to well up in her eyes.

Shangguan Tianyou said nothing. He looked exhausted, and had mixed emotions in his eyes. However, many years had passed, and he had changed. He was no longer the type to be easily excited.

Bei Han Lie's hands were clenched into fists as he glared hatefully at the disciples of the three sects. A corpse lay nearby, the corpse of a black dog.... Shortly before Bai Xiaochun had arrived, that black dog had fought to the death to protect him.

Within the sect headquarters, Patriarch Blood Stream was inside the Blood Ancestor, trembling with excitement. Even he had been despairing moments ago, but now, he suddenly found himself thinking about what Bai Xiaochun had looked like as Nightcrypt all those years ago on Middle Peak.

The rabbit stood on the Blood Ancestor's head, looking at Bai Xiaochun, muttering in a voice too low for anyone to hear.

Patriarch Spirit Stream, Zheng Yuandong, and the monkey were all looking at the hope of the sect!

"This is the miracle I was talking about!" the monkey murmured, his eyes shining with brilliant light.

As the River-Defying Sect brimmed with excitement, Bai Xiaochun looked over at the destroyed fleshly body of Patriarch Dao River, and at his fleeing nascent divinity. Then he turned to look at Patriarchs Starry River and Polarity River, who were so shaken by the defeat of the other deva that they didn't dare to continue their advance.

Because they were devas, and understood the Deva Realm well, they were more flustered than anyone else.

They knew that although Patriarch Dao River had only been in the early Deva Realm, the techniques he used made him the strongest of all of them. And yet, he had been defeated within a few breaths of time by Bai Xiaochun.

They could tell that, were it not for the fact that the chaos of the battlefield prevented Bai Xiaochun from giving chase, Patriarch Dao River would have a hard time escaping with his life!

Bai Xiaochun could kill devas! It was a realization that shook the two remaining patriarchs to the core. Because devas could supplant heavenly will, the spiritual power they had access to, as well as their magical techniques and divine abilities, all contained the might of creation. They were like gods to all lower cultivators, and were beings that were virtually impossible to kill.

Only someone who was also in the early Deva Realm would have a chance at beating someone like that. Furthermore, it would be difficult to end the fight with a kill. Therefore, what they had just seen play out in front of them seemed almost impossible. As Bai Xiaochun looked over at them, they both unleashed the power of their cultivation bases.

“Why don't we stop fighting for today, Bai Xiaochun...?” Patriarch Starry River said.

“We only made a move because the River-Defying Sect had no deva,” Patriarch Polarity River added in. “But seeing that you do, well, I guess this was all a big misunderstanding....”

Neither of them wanted to keep on fighting. The truth was that they weren't confident in being able to handle the terrifying Bai Xiaochun. Therefore, they both tried to play on his concern for the River-Defying Sect to end things.

“Don't just think about yourself, Bai Xiaochun. You have to consider the other disciples of the River-Defying Sect. They've been fighting for a long time as it is. There really isn't a need for any more fighting and killing....”

“That’s right. Our three sects still have the advantage. If we keep going, it won’t benefit the River-Defying Sect. Besides, your people are all exhausted. If they keep going now, there will surely be more injuries and deaths. You have to think of your fellow disciples!”

As Bai Xiaochun hovered there looking at them coldly, Patriarch Spirit Stream looked up from within the sect headquarters and shouted, “If we don’t crush the enemy, how could things be over!? Can the blood of the River-Defying Sect be spilt so casually? This place... is not one they can blithely intrude upon, and then just waltz away!”

The eyes of the other disciples turned crimson, and they began to shout in rage.

“Patriarch, do something! We’re all willing to keep fighting!”

“They invaded our River-Defying Sect, now they have to pay the price. In blood!!”

As the shouting grew more intense, the army from the three sects began to tremble. At the moment, they had no desire to fight at all, and in fact, began to edge away.

When Bai Xiaochun saw what was happening, his killing intent began to burn with even more intensity. Then, rumbling sounds echoed out as he shot toward the two remaining devas. Although he wasn’t a fan of killing, he knew that it was just as Patriarch Spirit Stream had said. These people had attacked the River-Defying Sect, and they had to pay the price!

Taking the fleshly body away from one measly deva was not enough!

Patriarchs Starry River and Polarity River felt their hearts pounding in their chests. Their faces fell as they realized... that they could not avoid this fight!

Considering that, they took solace in the fact that, although they might not be able to defeat Bai Xiaochun if they fought him one-

on-one, they could still join forces. Eyes flashing with determination, they unleashed their most powerful divine abilities!

Heaven and earth shook violently as countless heavenly bodies materialized around Patriarch Starry River.

As for Patriarch Polarity River, he knew he was facing a formidable opponent. A devilish will erupted around him as he summoned a massive devil projection with 1,000 arms!

Then, both of them charged toward Bai Xiaochun in attack!

A grand battle of devas was about to begin!

Chapter 869: Incomparably Mighty!

The instant Patriarchs Starry River and Polarity River attacked, Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered. Although it couldn't be said that he had copious amounts of experience fighting devas, he had fought more than a few during his time in the Wildlands.

Whether it was the three patriarchs in Giant Ghost City, the heavenly dukes in Arch-Emperor City, Mistress Red-Dust, who he had fought on more than one occasion, or even that spectacular battle of battles, they had all had a very profound effect on him.

It was because of all that experience that he actually didn't feel very apprehensive when facing devas. Furthermore, as he prepared to fight these two devas, his mind was alive with various thoughts.

His thoughts moved so quickly that he was virtually acting on instinct. He could immediately sense that, although he could fight these two, it would be dangerous. Furthermore, if they attempted to distract him by attacking and killing other disciples in the area, the consequences could be dire, to say the least.

In fact, if the three of them had done that from the very beginning, things might have turned out very differently. Even if Bai Xiaochun had been more confident than he was, it would have been a difficult situation to deal with. After all, this was the River-Defying Sect; Bai Xiaochun could not simply flee the battlefield, whereas his opponents could.

That was one reason why he had attacked like lightning and crippled one of his opponents right off the bat!

Now there were only two devas left, and yet, he still had many concerns to deal with.

The entire River-Defying Sect was a battlefield now, with booms and bangs echoing out everywhere. It was only by achieving a

spectacular and decisive victory in the first exchange that he could inspire the cultivators of the River-Defying Sect, and shake the hearts of the three sects.

All of these things occupied his thoughts. However, by this point in his life, he had developed exceptional awareness of how to do battle, and therefore, it was without the slightest hesitation that, as the two devas closed in on him, he utilized his Undying Hex. He suddenly moved with a speed that surpassed teleportation, veering away from Patriarch Starry River and bearing down on Patriarch Polarity River.

At the same time, he opened his third eye, and rotated his cultivation base at full measure, focusing his Heavenspan Dharma Eye directly on Patriarch Starry River.

That patriarch shivered physically as the shocking power of gravitational repulsion became like fetters, like a giant invisible hand that grabbed him and held him in place!

As Patriarch Starry River's face fell because of the shocking effects of the magical eye, Bai Xiaochun approached Patriarch Polarity River with lightning speed!

Patriarch Starry River had his black mist incarnated as a starry sky filled with heavenly bodies and asteroids. It was something that could affect a wide area, and although it wasn't necessarily a big threat to Bai Xiaochun, he knew that if the patriarch turned it onto the River-Defying Sect disciples, the consequences would be unimaginable!

As for the devilish god that the Polarity River Court deva had summoned, it had shocking battle prowess, and yet Bai Xiaochun didn't even pause for thought before rushing in that very direction!

Everything happened in the mere blink of an eye. As soon as Patriarch Starry River was locked down, Bai Xiaochun accelerated rapidly, arriving right in front of Patriarch Polarity River. There,

he clenched his hand into a fist and unleashed a fist strike.

The fist strike shook heaven and earth, unleashing explosive fleshly body power in a massive whirlwind that bore down on the patriarch!

The patriarch's face fell. Howling, he performed an incantation gesture, causing the devilish god to take a step forward and merge with him! Then, devil qi erupted out wildly, forming a buckler which he thrust out to defend himself.

A boom rang out as Bai Xiaochun's fist made contact with the buckler of devil qi. The buckler emitted cracking sounds for a short moment before collapsing, and yet, even as it did, a second buckler appeared, and then a third.

Bai Xiaochun had no time for thought or planning. Instead of backing up, he performed an incantation gesture and lunged forward.

“Living Mountain Incantation!”

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!!

Countless rocks and stones in the area flew up into the air, forming around Bai Xiaochun until he was an enormous stone golem!

He was now hundreds of meters tall and bursting with heaven-shaking, earth-shattering energy. In addition, the Living Mountain Incantation augmented his fleshly body power, making him seem supremely disdainful of everything in sight. Striking out with his fist, he destroyed the second buckler, as well as the third and the fourth.

Shock covered the face of Patriarch Polarity River because of how quickly everything was happening. Before he could do anything else, Bai Xiaochun, still in Living Mountain Incantation form, unleashed his Mountain Shaking Bash.

As the devil-form Patriarch Polarity River lunged backward,

Patriarch Starry River struggled furiously against the bonds which held him. Finally, they broke, and he prepared to join in on fighting Bai Xiaochun.

However, that was when Bai Xiaochun suddenly looked over his shoulder, once again focusing the gaze of his Heavenspan Dharma Eye on Patriarch Starry River.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as, to the madness and frustration of the patriarch, he was once again locked in place by this vile opponent. As he struggled, Bai Xiaochun continued onward toward Patriarch Polarity River, using the Living Mountain Incantation to full effect in another attack.

Bangs rang out as, in the blink of an eye, Bai Xiaochun unleashed dozens of punches, all of which landed on Patriarch Polarity River's devilish god form. Again and again he was shoved backward, slowly pushing him away from Patriarch Starry River.

It was a profoundly shocking sight that had many observing cultivators reeling, not only from Bai Xiaochun's shocking display of power, but from how instinctively he fought!

In the shortest of moments, he had used magical power to lock down one opponent, and fleshly body power to unleash devastating force on another!

Patriarch Polarity River was teetering on the verge of insanity. Bai Xiaochun's devastating windstorm of an attack had his qi and blood in chaos. Blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth, and yet, things were not over yet! Just when he was about to prepare a counter attack, Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered, and he let out a powerful shout.

As he did, his Living Mountain Incantation form collapsed, and all of the rocks shot out in front of him to create a gigantic fist. It was that fist that landed onto Patriarch Polarity River's devilish god form!

An ear-splitting boom filled the battlefield. The devilish god body shattered, revealing the patriarch's true self, blood spraying out of his mouth, his expression that of shock. At this point, Bai Xiaochun again turned and unleashed the power of his Heavenspan Dharma Eye, reinforcing the bonds locking down Patriarch Starry River, who had been just about to free himself!

Patriarch Starry River was filled with indescribable anxiety and frustration. He immediately began to resort to any means necessary, even those that caused dangerous backlashes, to try to escape. Aware that he wasn't a match for Bai Xiaochun, he knew that his only chance was to start attacking the bystanders in the hopes of distracting him.

However, it was in that very moment that intense killing intent flickered in Bai Xiaochun's eyes. Taking another step toward Patriarch Polarity River, he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand and then waved his finger, yet again summoning his frigid domain.

The entire 500-kilometer area iced over, and nine shadowy projections appeared, which slashed toward Patriarch Polarity River like nine sharp blades.

"You're a useless bastard, Patriarch Starry River!!!" Patriarch Polarity River screamed. The two patriarchs had agreed to work together, but Patriarch Starry River had been bound in place multiple times, making it completely impossible for him to help. As a result, Patriarch Polarity River had come to hate Patriarch Starry River even more than he hated Bai Xiaochun....

Unlike Patriarch Starry River, he didn't have a special divine ability to protect his nascent divinity from a deadly attack. If he were to be cut down in battle, he would die beyond the shadow of a doubt. It was a moment of deadly crisis, and as such, madness lit up his eyes. Even as Bai Xiaochun's nine frigid clones closed in on him, he chose to resort to.... fleshly body self-detonation!

BOOM!

Chapter 870: Let The Battle Resume!

Upon self-detonating, he could send the resulting ripples of force out to destroy the nine frigid clones. Few people would have the resolve to make a decision like that in the mere time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. But devas were the type of people who had experienced countless battles, and could react on an instinctual level in many situations.

As Patriarch Polarity River exploded, the resulting shockwave shattered the 500-kilometer frigid domain and overwhelmed the nine frigid clones. At the same time, the patriarch's nascent divinity shot out and began to flee at the highest speed possible.

He was afraid. More afraid than he had ever been before in his life. Furthermore, his hatred for Patriarch Starry River only continued to grow more intense. As far as he was concerned, if it wasn't for that useless patriarch, they would have been able to achieve a victory. But now... Patriarch Starry River was unharmed, whereas Patriarch Polarity River had destroyed his fleshly body, leaving behind only his nascent divinity.

His heart throbbed with animosity and terror, and he already had begun to wish that Bai Xiaochun's magical eye had locked onto him instead....

As all of those things happened, Patriarch Starry River drew dangerously upon his cultivation base to break free from the power of Bai Xiaochun's Heavenspan Dharma Eye. He could hear the howls of rage coming from Patriarch Polarity River, and the truth was that he was equally furious. But at the same time, he was deeply astonished. Panting, he looked at Bai Xiaochun, a person who attacked with unbridled madness, whose mountain-toppling, sea-draining blows had destroyed a deva's fleshly body and forced him to flee in nascent divinity form.

If it had only been once, he might have been able to accept it. But

in defiance of all imagination, he had witnessed it a second time. Shivering, he chose to not even try to help Patriarch Polarity River, and instead turned around and fled in the opposite direction.

The scene which had just played out left him shaken and filled with fear, to the point where he didn't care at all about his reputation, or the fact that tens upon tens of thousands of cultivators from the three sects were watching.

As he fled, he reminded himself that Bai Xiaochun was absolutely terrifying, and that if he didn't flee, he would be in deadly danger.

The sight of Patriarch Polarity River being reduced to a nascent divinity, and Patriarch Starry River fleeing in fear, caused shouts of alarm and rage to rise up from the cultivators down on the ground.

The shouts of alarm came from the Dao River Court and the Starry River Court, whereas the shouts of rage came from... the Polarity River Court!!

“Patriarch!!”

“Patriarch Starry River, you....”

Bai Xiaochun was quite taken aback. He had assumed that Patriarch Starry River would instantly attack him after freeing himself, or at least try to stop him from pursuing the other patriarch. He never could have guessed that the man would just up and flee.

“How shameless of you, you bastard!!” Patriarch Polarity River howled. At this point, his nascent divinity felt unstable, and his spiritual energy weak to the point of near-collapse.

One of them was fleeing to the east, and the other to the west. As for Bai Xiaochun, his eyes burned with killing intent. Had Patriarch Starry River come after him, he would never have been able to finish off Patriarch Polarity River. But now that both of

them were fleeing, that meant... he did have a chance to kill a deva!

It was without hesitation that he ignored Patriarch Starry River, and locked his gaze onto the nascent divinity form of Patriarch Polarity River. Killing intent seething, he threw his arms up into the air.

“Waterswamp!!”

Water vapor erupted out in all directions, instantly enveloping both of the fleeing patriarchs.

From a distance, it looked as if all heaven and earth had transformed into a watery swamp!

Mist roiled, and heaven-shaking, earth-shattering pressure weighed down everywhere, provoking gasps from the cultivators in the area. Up in the air, Patriarch Polarity River suddenly felt the most intense, terrifying sensation of imminent danger that he had ever felt in his entire life!!

“No!!” he shrieked, the pleading, begging tone in his voice clear for all to hear. The fleeing Patriarch Starry River was shocked, but he simply bit his tongue and focused on picking up speed as he fled.

Under the shocked gazes of everyone present, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes flashed, and he threw his hands down.

“Kingdom!!”

RRRUUUUMBLE!

The sound which exploded out surpassed heavenly thunder. As Bai Xiaochun’s Waterswamp Kingdom was unleashed, curved mountains shot up into the sky. All of a sudden, the entire world seemed to be taken over by some shockingly large beast who wielded mountain-toppling, sea-draining power!

The sky went dim until it was almost black. However, it was still possible to see that, stretching out from within the watery swamp,

clear for all to see, was the clawed hand of a beast!

“That’s... that’s the Waterswamp Kingdom!” The eyes of the Spirit Stream Division cultivators went wide, especially those who had come from the former north bank. What they were seeing completely defied all expectation and imagination.

As the enormous, clawed hand shot out from the watery swamp, minds went blank as both Patriarch Starry River and Patriarch Polarity River... were struck by the claws!

RRRRUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Mixed in with the deafening crash was the miserable shriek of Patriarch Polarity River. He attempted teleportations and other techniques to try to evade the clawed hand, but nothing did any good. In the blink of an eye, he was struck!

Before his scream could be fully voiced, his nascent divinity's eyes went wide, taking in his last view of the world. Then his nascent divinity was destroyed, and the patriarch... was wiped off of the face of all creation!! He had been killed in body and soul!!

Patriarch Starry River still had his fleshly body, and furthermore, was on the very edge of the watery swamp. Therefore, he wasn't as badly hurt. Roaring, he summoned countless stars and heavenly bodies to defend himself, and managed to escape, coughing up blood and terrified, but alive.

Upon seeing the other patriarch's nascent divinity destroyed, he was frightened, but at the same time convinced that his action of fleeing so decisively was the main reason he had escaped with his life!

He also considered himself lucky that he had been the one Bai Xiaochun picked to bind with fetters.... If it had been the other way around, he would likely be dead right now.

“You died, Fellow Daoist, and I lived.... If you want to blame someone, Patriarch Polarity River, don't blame me for not saving

you, blame yourself for being too weak....” Feeling profoundly lucky, the patriarch sped away.

Bai Xiaochun hovered there over the battlefield, watching the patriarch flee off into the distance. The man was moving too quickly to catch up with, and besides, although he didn’t look tired at all after crushing two devas in a row and killing one of them, it had taken all of his cultivation base and fleshly body power to do it. He was mentally and physically exhausted. Although defeating someone in the early Deva Realm was not very difficult, killing someone of that level was.

Furthermore, he had used his Heavenspan Dharma Eye three times in a row to lock a deva down. That alone had his qi and blood in chaos, kept in force only by the power of his fleshly body.

The truth was that he couldn’t have done it a fourth time. Furthermore, if Patriarch Starry River had attacked him, then he would have only had one trump card left... his Undying Emperor’s Fist.

That would have left him completely and utterly powerless, without a scrap of energy left to battle. At that point, if Patriarch Dao River had come back, he would have been in serious danger.

Although he looked majestic as he hovered there, he was actually in bad shape, and extremely tired. However, when he looked down at the deathly pale faces of the cultivators of the three sects, he realized that this was a good opportunity to shake them a bit more. Glaring off into the distance at Patriarch Starry River, he swished his sleeve.

“I’ll give you three breaths of time to get out of my sight, Patriarch Starry River. If you don’t, then I’ll swish my sleeve again... and reduce you to ashes!”

When Patriarch Starry River heard that, terror gripped his heart, and his mind began to spin. Holding nothing back, he drew upon his longevity for another burst of speed, and then disappeared over

the horizon....

Chapter 871: Uneasy!

Of the three devas, one had been killed, one was crippled, and one fled. All cultivators from all four sects were completely stunned, their minds having been battered by tsunami after tsunami of shock!

As for the cultivators from the three allied sects, they were trembling in despair, especially those from the Dao River Court.

Because Patriarch Starry River hadn't been killed, the cultivators from his court had it a bit better off. However, a single statement from Bai Xiaochun had sent their patriarch fleeing with no concern for anyone else. The sight of him holding nothing back to escape within three breaths of time filled the disciples from his sect with utter hopelessness.

Worst off... were the cultivators from the Polarity River Court. Their patriarch was dead, which meant that the Polarity River Court was destined to fall. In fact, they would likely not even qualify to remain in the Middle Reaches cultivation world.

Those disciples were in complete despair, their eyes bloodshot, and yet strangely, they didn't hate the River-Defying Sect.

After all, they were the invaders, and although they were shocked and even terrified by Bai Xiaochun's level of strength, they couldn't possibly dare to hate him. They hated... the Starry River Court!

Patriarch Polarity River's dying breath had been a curse upon Patriarch Starry River, and that was what kindled the hatred in the hearts of the cultivators from the Polarity River Court.

However, now was not the time to try to wipe out the Starry River Court. The Polarity River Court had no heart to continue fighting, and instead, began to flee. The Starry River Court and Dao River Court cultivators were also sapped of their will to fight,

and their hearts were seized with alarm and terror.

The patriarchs of all the sects had been routed, and the sects themselves were in imminent danger of collapse. Therefore, they could only think of one thing to do....

Flee!!

The three sects were like mountains collapsing into rubble. None of them dared to unleash a single attack as they went. They just ran.

Song Junwan looked over at Bai Xiaochun in his radiance. The sight of him cutting down devas with impunity, and dominating all creation, left her feeling more than a bit dazed. He seemed to be growing powerful so quickly that he would soon leave her far behind.

Master Limitless had similarly mixed emotions in his eyes as he recalled past scenes from the Blood Stream Sect. Next to him, the weak and injured Xuemei reacted in the same way. In recent years, she had often thought back to the misunderstandings of past years, and sighed emotionally.

The Blood Stream Division was completely shaken, and yet, even more shaken was the Spirit Stream Division. Many elders and disciples were familiar with Bai Xiaochun, and yet, he had grown to a level that filled their hearts with astonishment.

That was especially true of the disciples who were followers of Li Qinghou.

Shangguan Tianyou bowed his head, bitterness gnawing at his heart. Beihan Lie stood there silently, filled with complicated emotions. In the sect headquarters, the rabbit, the monkey, and the other powerful experts all reacted with zeal and excitement.

That was especially true of Sect Leader Zheng Yuandong, who was so excited he could hardly control himself.

Cheering soon broke out. And then, the cultivators looked

around at the fleeing enemies from the other three sects. At this point, the sect elders began to shout loudly.

“Kill them!”

“Kill them all!!!”

The River-Defying Sect disciples zealously shouted battlecries as they poured out of their headquarters in pursuit!

The Spirit Stream Division’s spell formation giants formed up again, hundreds of them, lunging forward with greatswords in hand, unleashing magical items to strike at the Starry River Court!

The injured Heavenhorn ink dragon roared and began to thrash into the enemy with deadly force.

The Blood Stream Division reacted similarly. Patriarch Blood Stream took the lead, followed by Song Junwan with her blood sword, as well as Master Limitless and the other leaders. They held nothing back to attack the Dao River Court!

Bruiser let out a howl, galvanizing the spirit beasts, animated corpses and gargoyles. Along with the Profound and Pill Stream Divisions, they attacked the army from the Polarity River Court.

The River-Defying Sect had quashed their despair, and were unleashing their might onto the enemy!

Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief. The burden he had shouldered in this battle had been beyond heavy. The slightest mistake, the tiniest slipup... could have led to the gravest of situations!

After all, the three sects’ forces still numbered roughly 100,000, whereas the River-Defying Sect had been cut down to only about 20,000. The slightest misstep could have led to the River-Defying Sect truly being wiped out.

It didn’t matter how amazing Bai Xiaochun’s battle prowess was, he couldn’t single-handedly fight an army of 100,000!

That was why he had taken such a big risk to deal with all three devas at the same time, and was also the reason why he was currently so exhausted.

Another reason why he had been able to eke out a victory was that the three deva patriarchs all came from different sects, and had fundamental differences and disagreements. Any one of them could turn on any of the others at any time.

With a relationship like that, it was easy to cooperate when the going was good. But when adversity struck... they could easily split apart!

Had the three of them cooperated fully, without any hesitation, then although they might not have been able to kill Bai Xiaochun, they would definitely have been able to grievously wound him, and most likely destroy the River-Defying Sect in the end!

If the Wildlands' four heavenly kings and Grand Heavenmaster had been reduced to the early Mortal-Dao Deva Realm, and then fought Bai Xiaochun, things would have been very different. Considering how well they cooperated and strategized, even if Bai Xiaochun had fought to the death with every trick in his book, they still would have come out alive.

It would have been nothing like what had happened here, with one deva being killed and two injured, and their fighting forces left completely demoralized.... When Bai Xiaochun considered all of these things, he suddenly realized he had come out quite lucky. Eyes flashing, he strode toward the fighting.

Him joining the fight demoralized the three great sects even more. They had been trying to fight back earlier, but now, they simply dropped their weapons and fled with all the power they could muster.

The entire battlefield was a scene of chaos. The cultivators of the three sects had few routes of escape, and the River-Defying Sect cultivators were cooperating well under the leadership of their

elders, and were striking with deadly force!

Bai Xiaochun focused on the three sects' Nascent Soul cultivators. He shook the battlefield wherever he went, saving everyone he could, but specifically looking for... Li Qinghou and Hou Xiaomei.

However, the field of battle was large, and in complete disorder. The fact that he couldn't find them caused unease to rise up in his heart, but around then, Bruiser came bounding over. He had shrunk down to normal size, and excitedly thumped his head into Bai Xiaochun's leg.

Bai Xiaochun smiled as he rubbed Bruiser's head. He had missed him terribly, and when he saw the scars and wounds criss-crossing him, anger began to burn in his eyes.

"Who dared to injure my Bruiser!?" he said through gritted teeth. "This... will not go unanswered!" With that, he reached out to touch the particularly eye-catching scar on Bruiser's neck.

"Over the next few days, Bruiser, we'll go find all the people who gave you these scars, and they'll have to answer to me!" Bruiser let out a long howl in response. However, the fact that Bai Xiaochun had touched the scar on his neck reminded him of something, and suddenly his eyes flickered darkly with grief.

Bai Xiaochun noticed the change in his expression, and his eyes widened. He knew Bruiser well, and was aware of the speed he was capable of. Even the devas of the three great sects should not have been able to wound him unless there was some sort of ambush involved.

Therefore, the only other explanation for how he could have been wounded in such a way was if he was in the middle of saving someone. Based on the state of the scar, it must have happened months ago.

Under what circumstances could Bruiser have been so anxious

that he failed to defend himself...?

In what situation would he have chosen not to flee to safety, and ended up surrounded...?

With such thoughts on his mind, Bai Xiaochun began to pant. Eyes widening, his uneasy feeling from before suddenly grew more intense!

“Bruiser, where is Uncle Li? And Hou Xiaomei? Where are they?!?!”

Chapter 872: Eruption

In response to Bai Xiaochun's question, more grief filled Bruiser's eyes. He couldn't hide anything from Bai Xiaochun, and in fact, didn't even have the desire to. All he did was let out a few braying sounds.

The sadness in his voice made Bai Xiaochun's heart feel like it was being torn apart. The world suddenly grew dark, as though it had become stained with blood!!

"You don't know where Hou Xiaomei is...? But Uncle Li... was captured?!?!?" Bai Xiaochun's expression twisted with rage, not toward Bruiser, but simply pure anger birthed from anxiety and madness. Seeing Bai Xiaochun like this caused Bruiser to emit a few more yipping sounds.

Bai Xiaochun was shaking visibly. Bruiser was no cultivator, and although he was a beast king with extraordinary intelligence, it was difficult for him to express himself clearly in certain matters. Ignoring the surrounding disciples of the three sects, Bai Xiaochun sent his divine sense spreading out in all directions.

Heaven and earth rumbled as he scoured everything in a 500-kilometer area. It only took a moment for him to have the entire locale under his command. His current goal... was to find Zheng Yuandong or other patriarchs of the River-Defying Sect, and get all of the details about Uncle Li!

As his divine sense spread out, all cultivators, both those of the three sects and those of the River-Defying Sect, suddenly felt immense pressure weighing down on them. At the same time, a windstorm sprang up around Bai Xiaochun.

In that same moment, a middle-aged woman appeared off in the distance in the sect headquarters. Her face was pale from serious injury, and she appeared to have just awoken from a coma. She seemed so weak that a breeze might carry her away, and could only

walk by being supported on either side by younger female disciples.

Her gaze quickly came to rest on Bai Xiaochun, and a gleam of excitement appeared in her eyes. At the same time, she seemed deeply anxious. Without the slightest hesitation, she raised her voice and cried out, “Xiaochun, hurry up and save your Uncle Li!!”

The instant Bai Xiaochun heard her voice, he jerked his head to look in her direction. He instantly recognized her. She was none other than the former peak lord of Violet Cauldron Peak, the Master of Big Fatty Zhang, and the woman who had fallen in love with his Uncle Li. She was... Xu Meixiang!

“Aunt Xu!” he cried. Trembling visibly, he vanished, to reappear a moment later in front of her. Reaching out, he sent gentle energy streaming into her body, which caused the color to return to her face. However, she still seemed as fragile as before, and her voice was hoarse and scratchy as she went on to provide further explanation.

“Get to the Dao River Court! Your Uncle Li was taken captive by the patriarch from there, about half a year ago!!” Xu Meixiang's sudden outburst caused her injuries to flare up. Blood sprayed out of her mouth, and if it weren't for the fact that she was being bolstered by Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base power, she would have perished instantly!

Her words struck Bai Xiaochun like a lightning bolt, causing him to shake violently where he stood. About this time, the patriarchs of the River-Defying Sect, as well as Zheng Yuandong and some other important people, could sense the violent outburst brewing in Bai Xiaochun. Furthermore, Xu Meixiang's words woke them all from the delighted happiness they had been reveling in moments ago because of the sect being saved.

It wasn't that they had intended to hide things from Bai Xiaochun, it was just that everything had occurred too quickly. He

showed up out of the blue, devastated three devas, crushed the morale of the three sects, and then sent the River-Defying Sect cultivators onto the counter attack. Many people were in a daze from everything that was occurring, and just hadn't yet thought to inform Bai Xiaochun of certain matters.

Patriarch Spirit Stream hurried over to provide a more thorough explanation!

The true reason everything had happened actually didn't have anything to do with Li Qinghou. After all, Li Qinghou was only in the Nascent Soul stage. Despite how incredibly talented he was, he wasn't so outstanding that a deva patriarch would attack him.

The reason for everything... was Bruiser!

The patriarch from the Dao River Court, the very one who had experienced fleshly body destruction and now existed as a nascent divinity, had coveted Bruiser for some time. However, Bruiser was always very careful, and normally never left the sect. Because of that, the deva patriarch had never had a chance to act on his desires.

However, half a year ago, that patriarch... had set up an elaborate trap to kidnap Li Qinghou, and use him to get to Bruiser!

The reason he had targeted Li Qinghou was obvious.... It all had to do with the relationship between Bai Xiaochun and Bruiser. The fact that Li Qinghou was like family to Bai Xiaochun and Bruiser was no secret. And thus, he was the perfect person to use to lure out Bruiser!

And that was exactly what had happened. Bruiser put everything on the line to try to save Li Qinghou, and had come out of the affair with an ugly scar on his neck. In the end, the River-Defying Sect's patriarchs had interfered, along with the reserve powers of the sect, including the Blood Ancestor.

In the end, the Dao River Court's ambush was foiled, and Bruiser

was saved. Unfortunately... Li Qinghou was taken away. Even now... they weren't sure if he was alive or not!

The reason they couldn't tell if he was alive or dead had to do with the special technique he cultivated. He drew his existence from plants and vegetation, and had been studying a way to reconverge his life force. Because of that, he had no life slip in the sect. That made it impossible to determine his current state.

Patriarch Spirit Stream, Zhao Yuandong, and the others used the fastest means possible to impart all of this information to Bai Xiaochun. In the end, his mind crashed as if with thunder, and his heart burned with raging killing intent.

“ARGGGGHHHHH!!” he howled, causing the sky to vibrate and the lands to tremble. Eyes crimson, he didn't bother to offer any explanation. He simply turned... and began to fly at top speed toward the Dao River Court!!

“Feeling suicidal, Dao River Court!? I'm gonna kill you, Patriarch Dao River!!!” The insane killing intent that raged in his heart and mind was the likes that rarely appeared in him. In fact, it had only been seen once before in his life, when his apprentice went missing in the Wildlands. This... was the second time.

However, this time was actually worse than when Bai Hao had gone missing. Bai Xiaochun almost seemed like a different person, a person who had descended into pure madness.

There was no other reaction he could have. After all... this was Li Qinghou!

His Uncle Li had brought him from Mount Hood to practice immortal cultivation, and had even taught him the fundamentals....

He had passed his magics of plants and vegetation on to Bai Xiaochun, and had sheltered him from one disaster after another related to pill concocting....

The truth was that... they had a relationship like that of a son and a father!

Not even Bai Xiaochun was exactly sure when it was that he had come to view Uncle Li as family!!

There were many people he cared about in the River-Defying Sect, but there was only one who he viewed like a blood relative.... Li Qinghou!

Therefore, how could Bai Xiaochun possibly not go mad!?

His thunderous roar filled the air as he shot off into the distance, followed by Bruiser.... As for Patriarch Spirit Stream and the other leaders, they were shaken by his shout. However, the patriarchs quickly issued orders for a squad of roughly 1,000 River-Defying Sect disciples to follow along as emergency backup.

As far as Patriarch Spirit Stream was concerned, it didn't matter how powerful the reserve powers and spell formation of the Dao River Court was, they probably couldn't handle Bai Xiaochun's towering cultivation base. However, as a member of the older generation, Patriarch Spirit Stream still had to look out for him.

More than 1,000 disciples immediately flew after Bai Xiaochun. Of course, they weren't a match for him in speed, so Patriarch Spirit Stream gave them airships to use, which whistled through the air at top speed toward the Dao River Court.

And yet, Bai Xiaochun was still the fastest. He drew deeply on his cultivation base, as well as his fleshly body power. He even used the Undying Hex to teleport rapidly through the air!

At his current speed, it would only require the time it takes an incense stick to burn for him to reach his destination!

Chapter 873: Xiaochun?

Bai Xiaochun's mind was almost a complete blank. He didn't dare to descend into reminiscence. Instead, he focused on one thing!

“Uncle Li... you have to be alive....”

Anxiety gripped his heart, profound nervousness generated, not from fear for himself, but from the possibility that he might hear news that could crush him.

Mental pressure began to mount, and his cultivation base was going crazy. All of the anxiety and madness swirled together, making a cyclone that dimmed heaven and earth.

Bai Xiaochun moved so fast that not even Bruiser could keep up. He shot through the air alone, leaving thunderous sonic booms behind him as he went.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

The massive sound caused by his passage attracted the attention of local cultivator clans, small-scale sects, and city after city. Everyone looked up in shock, and yet, they couldn't see Bai Xiaochun! They only saw a long wound-like streak appear above them in the sky!

Countless gasps and exclamations of shock filled the air.

“What was that sound?!”

“The sky... is being ripped open?!?!”

From a distance, the streak he left behind really did look like a rift opening up in the sky!!

Time ticked by. In the end, it took less time than an incense stick takes to burn. In his rage and anxiety, Bai Xiaochun appeared... in the mountains containing the Dao River Court!!

The sect headquarters was made of seven mountain peaks, each one a different color!

Because the routing of the three sects back on the battlefield had happened so quickly, the Dao River Court in general wasn't fully aware of what had happened. In fact, most of them didn't even know that their patriarch had lost his fleshly body. Only a few people had been informed, who then ordered that the sect's grand spell formation be activated.

Therefore, when Bai Xiaochun arrived, he saw a glittering light shield surrounding the sect, preventing anyone from entering!

It was a powerful shield which radiated intense pressure. After all... it was the grand spell formation of the number one sect in the Middle Reaches cultivation world of the eastern Heavenspan River!

But no matter how powerful that spell formation was, it couldn't compare to the spell formation that had protected the former Great Wall. Bai Xiaochun's Undying Hex had been able to pierce through that spell formation, and therefore, this trifling formation belonging to a Middle Reaches sect couldn't possibly do anything to him, not even if it had been created by a deva!

Bai Xiaochun didn't slow down for even a moment. In fact, he sped up. Rumbling sounds filled the air as he bore down on the Dao River Court, which currently housed several tens of thousands of cultivators who hadn't been mobilized during the war. That group included three Nascent Soul experts and many in the Core Formation stage. When they saw something streaking toward them through the sky, their eyes went wide.

“What's that?!”

“The sky... is being ripped open? But how?!”

“What's going on? That rift is actually heading right toward us!!”

No one in the group, not even the Nascent Soul experts, were able to see Bai Xiaochun. He was moving too quickly! The only thing they could see was that rift being slashed open in the sky!

Even as they began to cry out in alarm, the rift reached the grand

spell formation. And yet, bizarrely, the spell formation didn't react at all. There wasn't even the slightest ripple! Bai Xiaochun pierced right through it!

That was the power of the Undying Hex!

As soon as he was inside the Dao River Court, he slammed into one of the mountains, causing the sky to tremble and the land to vibrate.

RRRUUUUMBLE!

The mountain immediately began to crumble, with countless bits of rock and rubble showering down. Tens of thousands of cultivators dashed out of the way, crying out in alarm. Only at this point did the figure which had previously been impossible to see suddenly become clear in midair above the crumbling mountain!

Even as he hovered there, terrifying fluctuations rolled out, as well as a massive vortex which seemed capable of destroying the world.

The disciples of the Dao River Court gasped and trembled. Even the Nascent Soul cultivators were shaking in nervousness. However, this was their sect headquarters, so no matter how scared they were, they had to brace themselves and attack. Instantly, countless beams of light that represented magical techniques began to slash through the air toward Bai Xiaochun.

At the same time, deadly beams of light shot from the other mountain peaks in his direction.

“Get the hell out of my way!!” Bai Xiaochun roared, waving his hands out in front of him. A blast of wind spread out in all directions, slamming into the beams of light and magical techniques. All of them were crushed as easily as dried weeds, and yet, the blast of wind didn't stop.

The sect headquarters trembled, and blood sprayed out of the mouths of countless disciples. Screams echoed out as they fell

back, and yet, before they could get anywhere, Bai Xiaochun's divine sense shot out. In the blink of an eye, it filled the entire Dao River Court. Not even restricted areas and places locked down by spell formations were able to remain hidden. It was at this point that, deep underground beneath the Dao River Court... he found Li Qinghou's aura!

There, in a dank dungeon beneath the sect, were numerous prisoners, one of whom was the unconscious Li Qinghou... who appeared to be gasping on the verge of death!

When Bai Xiaochun saw that Li Qinghou was still alive, he breathed a sigh of relief. However, it was then that he realized what bad shape Li Qinghou was in, and his rage mounted. Without the slightest hesitation, he blurred into motion, unleashing a fist strike directly at the ground!

Crevices snaked out as the earth was ripped open. Numerous Dao River Court disciples were sent tumbling away from the force of the blow, their minds reeling and their hearts shivering in shock.

“Who is that?!?!”

“That's Bai Xiaochun. He's the one... who beat the three devas! He killed one, devastated the other, and sent the third running away!!”

“Dammit, what is he doing here...?”

Bai Xiaochun had already destroyed one of the seven mountains that comprised the sect headquarters. Now, his blow caused a second mountain to be ripped up and transformed into rubble.

At this point, Bai Xiaochun realized that one of the strange features of the Dao River Court's headquarters was its unusually thick ground. The seven mountain peaks of the sect were all connected at the base, which meant that to get to the underground area, all of the mountains had to be destroyed.

Bai Xiaochun was in no mood to go about it one at a time. Rapidly

performing an incantation gesture, he let out a shout, utilizing the Living Mountain Incantation to cause countless rocks in the area to rush toward him and transform him into a gigantic stone golem!

That stone golem's face looked exactly like Bai Xiaochun's! Without the slightest hesitation, he unleashed a second fist strike, which shattered more of the lands below. At the same time, two of the remaining five mountains began to collapse. Cries of alarm and terror filled the air as countless disciples fled in terror, unwilling to stay behind in their own sect headquarters.

As they fled, Bai Xiaochun let out a shout that caused the sky to distort. A third fist strike landed like a meteor falling from the heavens.

BOOOOOOOOOOM!

The remaining three mountain peaks collapsed amidst deafening rumbling sounds. The Dao River Court... had been reduced to rubble!!

From the time Bai Xiaochun arrived until the deed was done, not even sixty breaths of time had passed!!

As of this moment, the only thing that remained in the ground was a massive crater!

At the bottom of that crater was the Dao River Court's dungeon!

Without pausing for a moment, Bai Xiaochun blurred into motion, vanished, and then reappeared outside of Li Qinghou's cell!

The intense noise from moments ago caused Li Qinghou's eyes to flutter open. His aura was profoundly weak as he looked over at Bai Xiaochun. When he saw who it was, his eyes widened.

"Xiaochun?"

Chapter 874: Shake Down A Sect?

It was with uncertainty and open confusion that Li Qinghou said Xiaochun. At the moment, he wasn't sure whether or not he was dreaming. After being taken captive to the Dao River Court, he hadn't been tortured, but rather, been left to wallow in misery.

Although he didn't care too much about whether he himself lived or died, he hated the idea of himself being used as a trap to lure out Bruiser. In the end, he had been powerless to change the outcome. He hadn't even been able to kill himself.

He could only watch as Bruiser was ambushed. Afterward, his guilt began to consume him.

Thankfully, during the half year which had passed, Patriarch Dao River had never succeeded in getting his hands on Bruiser. However, the sword wound which had been inflicted on Bruiser's neck was something that Li Qinghou blamed himself for constantly. At the same time, his hatred of the Dao River Court grew more intense.

Although he had become nothing but a worthless prisoner rotting away in a dungeon, his hatred kept him going. As long as the Dao River Court stood, he could not allow himself to die!

He had gritted his teeth and endured the strange powers of the dungeon, which sucked away at his cultivation base and life force. He had grown weaker and weaker, and yet continued to hang on.

Thankfully, he cultivated a special technique based on the power of plants and vegetation, which offered him special protection. In this most critical of times, his complete focus kept him going, as did his hatred of the Dao River Court. And... Bai Xiaochun!

He had often thought about that young boy he had picked up from that mountain all those years ago. Although Bai Xiaochun had been gone for a long time, he wanted to see him again. He

wanted to protect him! He was worried that, unless he was there to look out for him, the boy would cause disasters the likes of which could never be resolved.

That became part of his focus, and therefore, despite the pain he faced, he endured.

Now, when he heard deafening booming sounds outside, he opened his eyes, and wondered if he was seeing things when he saw Bai Xiaochun right there in front of him.

As for Bai Xiaochun, when he heard Xiaochun, a tremor ran through him, and tears welled up in his eyes. Li Qinghou's voice was weak, but filled with a warmth and kindness that caused Bai Xiaochun's heart to leap in his chest.

“Uncle Li!!” he said, tears flowing down his cheeks. Although he had battle prowess that could crush devas, as well as the highest of statuses, when he was with Li Qinghou, he became the same Bai Xiaochun he had been back on Mount Hood, so afraid of lightning that he had lit a stick of incense thirteen times.

He reached forward and pulled Li Qinghou into an embrace. Weeping, he sent cultivation base power pouring into him, healing some of his injuries. At the same time, he realized how weak Li Qinghou had become, and his tears flowed even harder.

There were white hairs on Li Qinghou's head now, and he had wrinkles on his face, making him look middle-aged. Obviously, the half year of confinement had taken its toll.

He no longer looked like Bai Xiaochun remembered him, elegant and refined, a legacy echelon cultivator, the proud and unyielding peak lord of Fragrant Cloud Peak!

Li Qinghou was still a bit confused as he pulled back and looked at Bai Xiaochun. Ignoring his own weakness and injury, he reached out and... gently put his hand onto Bai Xiaochun's cheek.

“Is it really you...? You've grown up, kid. Alright, no crying

now....” He wiped the tears off of Bai Xiaochun’s face, fully convinced that this was the same young boy he had brought back to the sect from Mount Hood.

“It’s me, Uncle Li.... I’m back!” Bai Xiaochun dried his eyes and helped Li Qinghou to his feet.

Thanks to Bai Xiaochun’s help, Li Qinghou was already getting back some energy. He grinned.

“As long as you’re back, that’s all that matters....” Within his smile was approval, happiness, and kindness. He was a Nascent Soul cultivator, so despite the emotions which surged inside of him, he kept himself in control, and simply smiled at Bai Xiaochun.

Before he had a chance to ask Bai Xiaochun any questions about what he had been up to all these years, he looked out at the crater which surrounded them. With Bai Xiaochun’s help, they climbed out... whereupon Li Qinghou saw the crumbled ruins of the seven mountain peaks that made up the former Dao River Court, and the terrified Dao River Court disciples who were still fleeing off into the distance.

At that point, Li Qinghou couldn’t contain his excitement. Continuing to peer around, he said, “Did one of the patriarchs finally break through? Where is he?”

His first reaction was to assume that one of the patriarchs had finally reached the Deva Realm and come to break him out of the Dao River Court’s dungeon.

And yet, he immediately hesitated. After all, even after making a breakthrough, a single patriarch shouldn’t have been able to reduce the Dao River Court to this condition. At that point, he started to wonder if two patriarchs had broken through to become devas.

However, that seemed even less likely than his original guess.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, then cleared his throat. “Uh... Uncle Li, none of the patriarchs broke through.... Nobody else is here... except for us two.”

Now that he had rescued Li Qinghou, his stress was fading away, and his personality was going back to normal. As such, he held back from sounding a bit pleased with himself.

Li Qinghou’s jaw dropped. He looked around at the ruins, and then back at Bai Xiaochun, and suddenly laughed loud and clear. Slapping him on the shoulder, he said, “Good. Great. Excellent!”

He didn’t ask any details. He didn’t need to. The excitement he felt in his heart was all he needed. The child that he had brought to the sect from Mount Hood had grown up into a shocking figure.

The only disappointment he felt was that the fledgling had left the nest to fly in the endless sky, and that he no longer needed someone else around to take care of him. It was a feeling of both happiness and disappointment mixed together.

Li Qinghou’s reaction got Bai Xiaochun even more excited. Feeling very pleased with himself, he swished his sleeve and said, “This is nothing, Uncle Li. You have no idea how awesome I was back in the Wildlands. I--”

Before he could continue, a whistling sound filled the sky, which was Bruiser, who had only just caught up. As soon as he arrived, he saw the ruins of the Dao River Court, and Li Qinghou.

He didn’t seem surprised at all that Bai Xiaochun could destroy the entire Dao River Court. He excitedly shrank back down to normal size, rushed over to Li Qinghou, and began to rub him with his head.

Li Qinghou’s heart swelled with both warmth and remorse. Softly stroking Bruiser’s head, he looked at the scars covering him, and sighed.

“I’d always hoped I would be able to help you get your revenge,

Bruiser, but I guess I don't need to now. Your dad's already helped you." Chuckling, Li Qinghou looked around at the ruins, and then back at Bai Xiaochun, his heart bursting with pride. "Let's go, Xiaochun. The Dao River Court might be able to survive this somehow, but it will take them a long time to recover. If they ever do!"

"Calm down, Uncle Li, there's more to do." After measuring up the scene around them, Bai Xiaochun turned to Bruiser. "Bruiser, there were a bunch of other disciples following us, right? What's the delay? Why don't you go back and lead them here?"

Bruiser wasn't quite sure what he had in mind, but never refused to do what Bai Xiaochun asked him to do. He shot off, then returned a moment later with more than a thousand airships following him. The cultivators piloting the airships soon saw the dismal state of the Dao River Court, and couldn't help but gasp. Looking over at Bai Xiaochun with reverent gazes, they clasped hands.

"Greetings, Patriarch! Greetings, Elder Li!"

Their words confirmed what Li Qinghou had already suspected. Smile widening, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun, who shook his head and cleared his throat. Feeling a bit embarrassed, he waved his hand.

"Alright, enough of that. Hurry up and clear all this rubble away. The Dao River Court got destroyed too quickly, and everyone ran away. They definitely left some treasures behind. Let's clean this place out!" By this point, his heart was pounding as he thought back to all of the shakedowns he had performed in the past. However, all of those had been clan shakedowns. This was his first time overseeing a sect shakedown!

In response to his words, the surrounding 1,000 disciples' eyes glittered. Without any pause, they began to clear away the rubble and search the Dao River Court for treasure.

Li Qinghou's eyes shone with even deeper praise as he mused about how much this child had grown up. Even he himself had forgotten to loot the routed enemy.

“You're absolutely right, Xiaochun. The Dao River Court has years of reserves that will be of great help to the River-Defying Sect!”

However, even as the words left Li Qinghou's mouth, Bai Xiaochun frowned. Looking around at the River-Defying Sect disciples, he said, “You people don't know how to shake a place down! Aiya! Look, there are more rocks over there than anywhere else. It only takes a single glance to tell that there's some treasure there. Clear that rubble!

“Look at this! Get over here, people. This boulder is obviously fluctuating with magical power. There's definitely some kind of valuable treasure buried under it!

“Aiya! Look at you! What do you think you're doing? Pry up those floor tiles! They're obviously made from spirit stones!!” It was to Bai Xiaochun's great frustration that none of these people knew how to shake a place down....

Chapter 875: A Heavy Load And A Long Road

Bai Xiaochun was starting to get nervous. Therefore, he hurried up to the front lines. Considering that nobody knew what they were doing, he decided to take charge. Waving his hands and gesticulating wildly he said, “No, don’t dig there. Look at the ground. Who would put treasure there?! Look at that oversized vase right next to you. Now that’s a treasure!

“Look at all of you! Seriously...? Come come. Let me tell you how to do it. You 300 go and clear out those boulders over there. And you 300 get rid of the rubble of that temple over there!

“Now, for you 300, well, you have an even more important mission. You head to that restricted area over there and take everything you can get your hands on. Know what it does? Take it. Don’t know? Take it!

“The final 100 of you, come with me and just pick up whatever I tell you to. Oh, hey you... that’s actually not made from spirit stones. It’s just an ordinary floor tile....”

Considering the extensive experience he had shaking down clans in the Wildlands, it didn’t take long before he had the entire group of disciples sweeping over the sect like a hurricane... wiping everything away....

Eventually, he couldn’t help but sigh.

“Listen to me everyone, when you're shaking a place down, you have to pay attention. Do you understand that...? I mean, put some thought into it! If you were a sect patriarch, where would you hide all the treasure?!

“Too complicated? Alright, I’ll summarize. When you're shaking a place down, you have to remember three key words: Fast. Ruthless. Precise. Those are my Three Words of Wisdom I created

to pass down as part of my legacy!

“Fast. You have to move quickly in everything you do. Have you people seen locusts before? When you shake a place down, you have to become like locusts!

“Ruthless. Well, that’s simple. Your eyes need to be bloodshot, and you need to grab anything you see. Just imagine you’re in a treasure shop where everything is free. The more you can grab, the more you’ll profit. Our motto is... we take everything down to the grass and the roots!

“Finally, is Precise. Like I said, you need to pay attention. To shakedown amateurs who haven’t learned how to pay attention, well, let me tell you the trick. You have to... take everything you see even if you don’t know what it is or whether it’s valuable!

“Just wait until we get back. Then we can appraise everything properly. We just need to make sure we have everything to appraise to begin with.” He spoke loudly, and his eyes danced up and down as he provided this crucial training. His words echoed about in the ruins of the Dao River Court, leaving the rest of the disciples temporarily dumbstruck, and gasping inwardly.

“How can the patriarch be so good at shakedowns?”

“This is my first time hearing the Three Words of Wisdom of shakedowns....”

“He’s... he’s so familiar with shaking places down....”

Strange and even blank expressions could be seen on the faces of everyone present. No one had ever heard of someone making up three words to summarize how to perform a shakedown. Furthermore, it was obvious that such wisdom could only come from someone who had a huge amount of experience in such matters. That would be the only way to distill the action down into three words of wisdom.

In fact, it was something only a professional could do....

The disciples weren't the only ones to react in such a way. Li Qinghou stared with blank eyes as Bai Xiaochun scurried back and forth, giving direction and pointers everywhere he went.

Thanks to his timely instruction, the disciples quickly excavated all of the treasures of the Dao River Court. As it turned out, the Three Words of Wisdom were truly powerful.

Li Qinghou was both confused and also felt a bit of a headache coming on. Rubbing the bridge of his nose, he looked on helplessly with the realization that... no matter what cultivation base level Bai Xiaochun reached, there would always be something about him to worry about.

"He actually created a summary of how to shake places down.... I guess... he just has a knack for it...." Li Qinghou sighed, unsure of what to even say.

One thing he didn't notice was how closely Bruiser was paying attention to everything. Years ago, it was the teachings of the black dog which had enabled Bruiser to attract so many female beasts to his side. And it was also from Bai Xiaochun that he had learned the ways of pride.

All of a sudden, a new world seemed to be presented to him, causing his eyes to shine with veneration. In his opinion, this dad of his was simply too awesome. Who could have ever imagined that he had mastered a skill like this?

After observing this special technique of shakedown first-hand, Bruiser immediately realized that he had a new mission in life, and committed it to memory.

It took about two hours for the disciples to wipe the Dao River Court clean. By the end, their feelings for Bai Xiaochun had changed. Although they still felt deep awe and admiration, there was something else that they just couldn't put their finger on as well.

Many of them suddenly recalled stories they had heard about things Bai Xiaochun had done years ago, stories that placed them right in the middle of laughter and tears....

“So, this is what Bai Xiaochun is like....”

“Patriarch Bai... ah whatever, I’ll just keep calling him Bai Xiaochun....”

Although all of the disciples were muttering similar things, with Bai Xiaochun’s instructions, they were enlightened regarding the Three Words of Wisdom, and cleaned out the Dao River Court until there wasn’t even any grass left anywhere....

They took most of the boulders, and the remains of most of the buildings.... If the disciples of the Dao River Court ever returned, they would surely be stunned, and would likely think they had taken a wrong turn somewhere.... They would definitely not recognize their sect.

Bruiser ended up helping out quite a bit. Not only was he a quick learner, he could change the size of his body at will, making it easy to get through tiny cracks to find special treasures. Bai Xiaochun sighed in admiration at how smart his son Bruiser was.

“Excellent! You’ve got real talent, Bruiser. From now on, our shakedown abilities are going to improve dramatically, all thanks to you!” Bai Xiaochun’s words of praise caused Bruiser to virtually glow with pride.

However, as he watched, Bai Xiaochun actually felt a bit displeased. He really missed Zhou Yixing. Zhou Yixing could have dug out all of the treasures much more quickly....

“This isn’t going to work....” he thought. His expression suddenly turned serious. “Yep. It seems I need give them some more training. Everyone in the sect needs to understand the quintessence of shakedowns!

“That way, the River-Defying Sect will have more wealth than

ever. All disciples will have plenty of cultivation resources. It will be good tidings for everyone in the sect!” Although it meant that things would be a bit more stressful, at least it gave him a new mission to work on.

People started realizing that Bai Xiaochun had a thoughtful expression on his face, even Li Qinghou. Li Qinghou massaged the bridge of his nose again, a wry smile on his face as he realized that Bai Xiaochun must be coming up with some more plans. Finally, Li Qinghou cleared his throat.

“Alright, Xiaochun. Let’s get back home to the River-Defying Sect.”

Bai Xiaochun agreed, temporarily putting aside his previous thoughts. Waving his sleeve, he led Bruiser, the 1,000 disciples, and Li Qinghou through the air in a grand procession back to the River-Defying Sect.

On the way back, Li Qinghou finally asked Bai Xiaochun about how the fighting had fared in the River-Defying Sect. It was with sparkling eyes that Bai Xiaochun went into vivid detail about the story. When Li Qinghou heard that Bai Xiaochun had fought three devas, and ended up killing one, crippling another, and sending another one fleeing, his heart trembled. Although he had guessed that things played out something like that, to hear the truth personally was still astonishing.

After a bit of time spent chatting, they were closing in on the River-Defying Sect.

Meanwhile, Patriarch Dao River had finally managed to sneak home in nascent divinity form. Actually, he had been waiting some distance away while everything happened in the sect.

It wasn’t until Bai Xiaochun actually left that he dared to actually go back into the emptied sect. There, he looked around in confusion, wondering if he was hallucinating.

“Is this really... the Dao River Court?” After staring around blankly for a while, a tremor ran through him, and he threw his head back and screamed, “You’re pushing things too far, Bai Xiaochun!!!”

Chapter 876: Back Home

Very little time had passed in the River-Defying Sect since Bai Xiaochun's shocking performance. In fact, even including the shakedown, it had only been a handful of hours.

The cultivators of the three sects were still fleeing, and the disciples of the River-Defying Sect were still chasing them down. The area surrounding the River-Defying Sect was in complete chaos.

There was nothing the patriarchs could do to get the disciples to calm down. Earlier, they had been in a situation of deadly crisis, and under the most incredible stress imaginable. Now, they were finally able to vent!

250 kilometers. 500 kilometers. 1,000 kilometers....

Before long, the cultivators of the three sects were completely driven away. Those who could not escape chose to surrender.

After the chase reached the 1,500-kilometer-mark, the enthusiasm of the River-Defying Sect cultivators began to fade. They were also starting to get exhausted. Eventually, at that 1,500-kilometer mark, the patriarchs issued orders to cease the pursuit!

The fleeing cultivators of the three sects could finally breathe sighs of relief, and scatter in terror.

All of them knew... that the River-Defying Sect was going to rise to prominence!!

Bai Xiaochun had completely turned the tables on them, and although the River-Defying Sect had sustained heavy losses, in the end, they had achieved victory!!

Any disciples from the other sects who ran into River-Defying Sect cultivators in the future would be filled with terror, and not dare to do anything to provoke them. The battle had seen them completely defeated, both physically and in spirit!

As could be imagined, news of the conclusion of the battle spread like wildfire throughout the cultivation world of the Middle Reaches. The Lower Reaches were shocked, and the general structure of the Middle Reaches was already changing.

Obviously, it created a stir back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect as well. After all, the three great sects had obtained their tacit approval before making their move.

In addition to that, Bai Xiaochun wasn't just a member of the River-Defying Sect. He was a disciple of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect as well, and had also served as a major general at the Great Wall.

Historically speaking, major generals would always join the Hall of Steel Veins, and become the most powerful of elders back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. And that was not to mention the fact that Bai Xiaochun had friends in the sect. For example, there was Zhao Tianjiao and his Daoist partner Chen Yueshan, as well as Bai Lin from the Great Wall, among others.

In the past, before Bai Xiaochun made his return, such friends had done their best to keep the River-Defying Sect safe. Now that Bai Xiaochun was back, one could only imagine what the reaction would be in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect on the part of his friends!

The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect would definitely be very interested in Bai Xiaochun's explosive battle prowess. Furthermore, he knew that it wouldn't be long before orders came down about what was to happen next.

However, regardless of what stance the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect would take, the River-Defying Sect currently needed stability after its huge fight. They needed to rest and recuperate; their victory had come at great cost.

The spell formation cast by the Dire Skybanyan had been almost completely destroyed, and required extensive repairs. The reserve

powers of the four divisions had been either seriously damaged or completely eradicated. Most of the sect headquarters had been destroyed. Of the mountain ranges belonging to the four divisions, two and a half had collapsed, and would need significant help from the patriarchs to rebuild.

By the time Bai Xiaochun and Li Qinghou got back, the repair work was already underway. Many people were thrilled to see Li Qinghou, including Zhao Yuandong, Patriarch Spirit Stream, and many other friends. Xu Meixiang was especially happy. She had been in despair before, so to finally see Li Qinghou again caused tears to stream down her face.

Li Qinghou was deeply moved to finally see Xu Meixiang after more than half a year of being locked away. As soon as their gazes locked, Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times and then smiled. On the way back, he had given Li Qinghou a deva soul, and had done more work treating his injuries. Therefore, he felt comfortable leaving him alone with Xu Meixiang, and instead took Bruiser on a tour through the sect.

As soon as he saw the extensive damage close up, and all of the wounded disciples, his mood sank.

The truth was that the sect had sustained bitter casualties and many deaths. However, they had made gains as well. They took tens of thousands of captives, and had also seized numerous magical items and other resources.

Even better than that were the numerous reserve powers and precious treasures belonging to the three sects, items that their deva patriarchs had left behind, and which had been collected by River-Defying Sect disciples.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't the only one to have performed dramatically in battle. Although he had been the one to turn things in the favor of the sect, Bruiser was actually one of the main ones who had kept the sect going until Bai Xiaochun got there.

Bruiser's cultivation base was already in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, and he was a beast king, meaning that he could fight with devas if he really needed to. Although he couldn't come out on top in such a fight, his battle prowess was still shocking.

Furthermore, since he was a beast king, as long as enough time passed, he would eventually reach the Deva Realm, which would be of indescribable benefit to the sect as a whole!

In addition to Bruiser, Song Junwan had performed spectacularly. Although she wasn't in the Nascent Soul stage yet, only the great circle of Core Formation, she had wielded the Middle Peak blood sword with precision and valor. She had surpassed the leaders of the other mountain peaks to become a virtual blood fiend, leading the entire Blood Stream Division in their fight against the enemy!

There were also chosen from the Spirit Stream Division who had fought valiantly. Shangguan Tianyou was one of them. He was now in the pseudo-Nascent Soul stage, and forgetting Bai Xiaochun and the most powerful experts, was the strongest disciple in the sect, and quite famous. After all, the patriarchs said that Shangguan Tianyou was the reincarnation of a sword immortal! Furthermore, his personality had changed dramatically. He was much more silent and serious, something that made the other disciples respect him even more.

And then there was Beihan Lie. Although he had never been the strongest of the chosen, he had risen to prominence in the Fallen Sword Abyss by reaching Earthstring Foundation Establishment. He was now in the late Core Formation stage, and although he couldn't surpass Shangguan Tianyou, was still considered far beyond the others of his generation!

The other divisions also had chosen who had risen to the heights of glory. It went without saying that the sect would soon dole out rewards for them, and that they would have a bright future in the days to come.

As Bai Xiaochun saw one familiar face after another, and saw everyone looking back at him with fervor and passion, he suddenly felt a warm feeling rise up within him. It was the feeling of being home.

It was something he had never really felt back in the Wildlands. And that was because... for all eternity, this would be the place he called home.

As the sect went about the repair work, Bai Xiaochun joined in. At one point, he ran into the Heavenhorn ink dragon, who had been seriously injured and was gasping for breath. Others in the sect had attempted to treat him, but at the moment, he seemed like he might slip into death at any moment. Bai Xiaochun immediately went to work, calling upon the power of his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul to gradually heal his wounds.

Bruiser had disappeared, but he came back around the time Bai Xiaochun finished treating the old dragon. When Bai Xiaochun saw him, his eyes went wide. Bruiser was flanked by a large number of strange spirit beasts. Some were large and some were small, but without exception, all were female....

“Are these your wives?” Bai Xiaochun asked, stunned. Bruiser made a whinnying sound, which caused Bai Xiaochun’s heart to tremble in shock.

“And them...?” Bai Xiaochun continued, pointing at... a group of more than a thousand strange-looking little beasts behind the females.

An expression of pride appeared on Bruiser’s face, and he made a few chuffing sounds. Although many people in the sect had already come to guess the truth, none of them understood the situation better than Bai Xiaochun....

“Well damn.... Those are all your children?” Tongue stuck to the roof of his mouth, Bai Xiaochun looked at the female beasts, and then all the tiny beasts, and was suddenly completely convinced of

how amazing Bruiser was.

Bruiser was very pleased to see Bai Xiaochun reacting this way. Looking back at all the female beasts, he made a few barking sounds. Immediately, all of the spirit beasts dropped down onto their knees and howled at Bai Xiaochun.

There was nothing fierce about it. It was a cry of respectful greeting given to someone of the senior generation.

Bai Xiaochun smiled wryly, fully aware of what Bruiser was trying to say. Bopping Bruiser on the head, he sighed. Since Bruiser was his son, then these beasts... were his daughters-in-law and grandchildren.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun patted his bag of holding to produce some Wildlands soul medicine to give out as a gift of greeting. After all, soul medicine could be used like spirit stones by soul cultivators, but could also be very effective for spirit beasts. Furthermore, it was very rare in the Heavenspan River region.

The spirit beasts were all very excited to receive soul medicine from Bai Xiaochun, and began to cry out in joy. Bruiser was obviously very happy, and looked exactly like someone from the senior generation who had been given a lot of face.

Seeing Bruiser so happy put a smile on Bai Xiaochun's face, and he sighed.

“Yeah, I really am home....”

Chapter 877: Things Change, People Stay The Same

The entire sect was bustling. The air buzzed with conversation as Patriarch Spirit Stream and the other powerful experts utilized mountain-hurling, sea-draining magical techniques to repair the damage done to the four mountain ranges that made up the headquarters.

The Pill Stream Division used all of their power to save the Dire Skybanyan, and also had all disciples working around the clock to concoct medicinal pills.

The Profound Stream Division was hard at work repairing the spell formations that protected the sect, as well as the countless magical items that disciples of the sect had damaged during the course of battle.

The Spirit and Blood Stream Divisions had taken the lead in the actual fighting, and therefore, many of them went into secluded meditation to recover. Those who were able assisted in the repair work to the sect itself.

When Bai Xiaochun found Song Junwan, she was busy administering the affairs of Middle Peak. Although she very much wanted to spend some alone time with him, and speak of various matters of the heart, her current duties were more important.

Because of Bai Xiaochun's current status in the sect, as soon as he showed up, the disciples gazed at him with fervor and adoration. In fact, the way they clasped hands in formal greeting caused the repair work to slow down.

Bai Xiaochun savored the wonderful sensation, and was preparing to leave when he realized that he really should offer some words of encouragement. However, before he could even open his mouth, Song Junwan glared at him and shooed him away.

He rubbed his nose awkwardly as he walked off. Although he was inclined to defy Song Junwan, merely looking at her caused him to think back guiltily to what had occurred in the Wildlands with Mistress Red-Dust. The prospect of what could happen if Song Junwan and Hou Xiaomei found out caused his heart to tremble with fear.

As far as Hou Xiaomei went, Bai Xiaochun had learned from Li Qinghou that both she and Ghostfang had been taken away by the Celestial over half a year ago, to serve as special guards on Heavenspan Island.

Apparently, Heavenspan Island occasionally recruited special guards to serve on the island.

To the sects in the Heavenspan River region, any cultivator selected for a position like that was being bestowed with good fortune. Furthermore, not everyone who was initially recruited would end up serving on the island. Many of them would be sent back after a short period of time. Even those people would experience a significant boost in cultivation base, though. As for those who remained to serve, they ended up earning extremely high status, and would be treated with the utmost courtesy even by the riversource sects.

Bai Xiaochun felt uneasy about the whole thing, although he wasn't sure exactly why. For one thing, based on his calculations, he was fairly certain that Hou Xiaomei had been taken away at roughly the same time that the dramatic battle had been fought back in the Wildlands.

“Or am I just thinking too much into it?” After some thought, he decided that the best thing would be to use this as an excuse to go see Hou Xiaomei.

Even as he pondered these matters, he happened to catch sight of Shangguan Tianyou.

He stood at the edge of a cliff, his face touched with grief and

reminiscence, his eyes somewhat blank as he looked off into the distance. For some reason, he seemed older and more mature.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit surprised to see an expression like this on Shangguan Tianyou's face. After a moment of thought, he walked over, and then followed Shangguan Tianyou's line of sight until he noticed what appeared to be a log cabin in the jungle below the cliff.

Next to the log cabin... was a grave mound.

Shangguan Tianyou held a strip of blue cloth tightly in his hands. His hands were clenched so tightly around it that it seemed he would never let go of that cloth, even if he died. And there he stood, murmuring to himself as he looked at the distant grave.

Bai Xiaochun looked at the grave thoughtfully, and suddenly realized that there was one old friend he hadn't seen after returning to the sect. He shivered.

"That's Xinqi's grave," Shangguan Tianyou said quietly, his voice hoarse and tinged with bitterness. There was no trace of his former jealousy and hatred of Bai Xiaochun. Such things had been wiped away with the passage of time, along with his hot-headedness.

"Elder Sister Zhou...." Bai Xiaochun breathed. He thought back to what he remembered of Zhou Xinqi, who had once been Li Qinghou's apprentice, the famed Elder Sister Zhou of Fragrant Cloud Peak.... He thought about how he had leaped at the chance to help her hunt down the Chicken-Thieving Fiend of years past... and how he had made fun of her by calling her 'Sect Niece Xinqi'.

They were memories that Bai Xiaochun would never be able to wipe away. His breathing suddenly turned ragged, and he began to tremble. There was nothing that would cause his heart to be weighed down more than a friend his own age passing away.

She would be an eternal part of his memory, and yet, everything

she had ever said and done was now gone forever....

When Shangguan Tianyou saw how Bai Xiaochun was reacting, the grief in his eyes grew more intense. Shangguan Tianyou wasn't sure when it had happened, but he had fallen in love with Zhou Xinqi, and she with him. However, even after she died, he had never spoken his feelings out loud.

Ten years ago, Zhou Xinqi had been out on a mission for the sect when she ran into some cultivators from the Polarity River Court. A fight broke out, and she was killed. Although Shangguan Tianyou had avenged her death, he had never been the same afterward.

He had become quieter, and less impulsive. He worked hard on his cultivation, and had slowly but surely become the strongest cultivator of his generation in the River-Defying Sect.

And yet, Zhou Xinqi's face was always there in his heart. The blue strip of cloth he held in his hands now had been a gift from her, and was something he would keep with him for all eternity.

Bai Xiaochun stood there quietly, looking at Zhou Xinqi's grave. After a long moment passed, he clasped hands and bowed deeply at the waist....

Shangguan Tianyou closed his eyes. After some time passed, he opened them again, and looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

"Thank you, Bai Xiaochun...." With that, he turned and walked off, looking profoundly bleak....

Bai Xiaochun watched him leave, then stood there for a long time looking at Zhou Xinqi's grave, his heart heavy. He simply couldn't stop thinking about what she had looked like all those years ago.

He suddenly realized where those white hairs on Li Qinghou's head had come from; the death of one of his beloved apprentices.

"Why...? Why does cultivation have to be all about fighting and killing...?" It was the same question he had been asking himself

from the moment he entered the cultivation world.

After everything he had seen and experienced, you would think he would have found an answer already. But... he hadn't.

Eventually, he left, thinking about how there were still so many things he didn't understand. Although the sect had won a great victory, it came with many tears. As he walked along, he sent his divine sense out to examine the home he had been away from for so long.

One of the first people he noticed was Beihan Lie....

In a remote location in the sect was a huge graveyard, within which were buried countless heroic souls who had fallen in battle.... That was where Beihan Lie stood, in front of a gravestone that he had personally carved.

There was no name on the gravestone. There was only a carving.... Of a big, black dog.

Beihan Lie held an alcohol flagon in his hand. The passage of years was clearly visible on his face. The hair at his temples was white, and he seemed much older. The aroma of alcohol surrounded him as he looked at the grave, mixed emotions playing out on his face.

That big black dog had died saving his life.

Bai Xiaochun's heart yet again filled with complex emotions. He suddenly realized that many things had happened of which he wasn't aware. Although the fact that the black dog was dead filled his heart with grief, he decided not to interrupt Beihan Lie. Instead, he sent his divine sense sweeping over the countless other graves in the area.

Some of the names were familiar, others were not, but they all caused him to tremble.

It was around this time that Gongsun Wan'er's brother, Gongsun Yun, happened to find Bai Xiaochun. Gongsun Yun was visibly

older than before. He had reached Core Formation, but only the early stage. By now, he was no longer the famous person he had been back during the chosen battles between the north and south banks of the Spirit Stream Sect.

Both Beihan Lie and Ghostfang had long since left him behind. However, he never lost his dignity, nor his pride because of his little sister.

Although his sister had become very cold and distant after returning from the Fallen Sword Abyss, and had seemed very different, the fact that she ended up being taken away to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect proved how incredible she was. Unfortunately, she had ended up being teleported out into the Wildlands, to parts unknown. That had been a heavy blow to Gongsun Yun, and a source of constant anxiety.

Gongsun Yun was trembling with nervousness, and yet he braced himself, clasped hands, and said, “P-Patriarch Bai... you’re back, sir. Song Que and Master God-Diviner too. Um... do you have any news about my sister?”

Bai Xiaochun stood there quietly, complex emotions flickering in his eyes as he looked at Gongsun Yun. After a moment of hesitation, he decided not to tell him the truth.

“Wan'er died in battle at the Great Wall... She gave her life to save a friend....”

Gongsun Yun stood there stiffly for a long moment, tears welling up in his eyes before they poured down his cheeks. Although he had long since suspected that this was what had happened, he had still held out hope. But not anymore. Clasping hands, he walked off, tears streaming down his face.

Chapter 878: Eternity

Even after seeing Gongsun Yun's sorrow, Bai Xiaochun still didn't tell him the truth. There was no way he could. How could he possibly explain that Gongsun Wan'er had actually been killed long ago in the Fallen Sword Abyss?

It would be too cruel to tell Gongsun Yun that the little sister he had seen afterward was really that bizarre girl. Bai Xiaochun simply couldn't bear to deliver such a bitter blow.

Instead, he told Gongsun Yun a story in which his sister sacrificed her life as a hero.

The story he told wasn't without its flaws, and apparently Gongsun Yun realized that. But he didn't ask any follow-up questions....

"Little sis, was that really you who came back to the sect...?" he thought. The truth was that he had asked himself that same question on many occasions, and didn't really want to know the answer....

After Gongsun Yun left, Bai Xiaochun felt even worse than before. He didn't like feeling like this. He liked being happy and having fun. However, as he grew up, he realized that such emotions were inescapable.

Oftentimes in the past, he was able to bury such feelings, but right now, all the graves he had seen caused Zhou Xinqi's face to float in his mind even more clearly than before, as well as many other familiar faces. They were images he simply couldn't dispel.

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At the moment, no other patriarch in the sect had a better chance of becoming a deva than Patriarch Spirit Stream. He was in a better position than even Patriarch Blood Stream.

Patriarch Spirit Stream could sense the bleakness of Bai

Xiaochun's mood. As he looked at him from a distance, he could tell from the fluctuations of his divine sense how sorrowful he was. Although he didn't understand Bai Xiaochun as well as Li Qinghou did, he had been there to watch him grow into the person he was.

At some indefinite point, he appeared next to Bai Xiaochun, although he didn't interrupt him. He just stood there, looking at all of the graves of the River-Defying Sect.

Eventually, when the time was right, he spoke in a hoarse voice filled with age.

"Xiaochun, look around.... Can you tell what's different about the sect...?"

Bai Xiaochun had long since become aware that Patriarch Spirit Stream had come to stand next to him. However, he was in too bad of a mood to say anything. In response to the patriarch's words, he looked around.

The sect was filled with a buzz of noise as all sorts of repair work went underway. Everyone was toiling away. Although nothing dramatic was happening, close examination revealed that the sect was rapidly returning to its previous state. It wouldn't be long before it thrummed with just as much life as before.

As for all of the disciples of the three sects who had been captured, they were important bargaining chips that could either be absorbed into the sect as new disciples, or traded with the three sects for remuneration.

"Do you know what's different?" Patriarch Spirit Stream asked again. "Do you know why all of the disciples are working so hard? Do you know why they are all so focused...? Because this isn't just their sect. It's their home!"

"Spirit Stream Sect. River-Defying Sect. It doesn't matter. They're the same. The good fortune of the disciples is the good fortune of the sect. That's the most important thing. As long as the

disciples have enough faith and trust in the sect, then... the sect will be their home!

“And the truth is that our sect... is a home to all of us, patriarchs included!” Patriarch Spirit Stream was very, very old, and in fact, if it weren’t for the fact that he relied on a special secret magic, he would have long since perished. Perhaps because of that secret magic, or perhaps because of the dramatic events that the River-Defying Sect had seen in recent years, his face was covered with even more wrinkles than ever, making him seem even more ancient.

At this point, Bai Xiaochun’s mood stopped sinking. However, there was still something gnawing at his mind. Slowly but surely, he looked over at the patriarch.

“Patriarch... don’t we cultivators practice cultivation so that we can live forever? Why do we have to go around fighting and killing all the time? As long as we’re alive, there are endless possibilities! But once we die... then what’s the point of it all...?” This question had been lodged deep in Bai Xiaochun’s heart for many years, and would not go away.

It was a profound question, and in response, Patriarch Spirit Stream simply stood there quietly for a moment. The truth was that he didn’t have an answer. A long moment passed, and he seemed to grow a bit older. Then he looked back at Bai Xiaochun, his eyes warm but tinged with pain.

It was pain because of the sorrow he felt for his most outstanding of all the Spirit Stream Division disciples. After all, he knew that from the first day Bai Xiaochun had joined the sect, he had feared death and dreamed of being able to live forever.

Patriarch Spirit Stream had watched this disciple tackle the brutal cultivation world, and yet never forget his dream of living forever. There was a purity and innocence in that which was very, very rare.

“Xiaochun...” he said softly. “You’re right. As long as we’re alive, there are endless possibilities. But just because we die doesn’t mean that our hopes and dreams die with us!

“I can’t speak for anyone else, but I can say that when I look at all of these graves, I’m absolutely certain... that these disciples who died in battle did it because of the Dao that existed in their hearts!”

“What do you mean Dao?” Bai Xiaochun replied, confused. He had been asked a similar question back in the rainbow trial by fire in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. And although he had never answered the question, he had the vague feeling that his Dao... was to live forever.

“The word Dao is profound and deep,” the patriarch answered. “No one can really explain it perfectly.... As for me, only by living for many, many years have I been able to experience what it means....

“Dao is focus. Think about all of these heroes who fell in battle. Do you think they weren’t afraid of death? Do you think they didn’t want to live forever? They were afraid. And they did want to live forever! But the sect was their home, and they were fighting to defend and protect it. They were willing to sacrifice their own lives, even to the point of giving up on their own wishes and desires. No matter how much it pained them, they swore to die defending their home!

“As for me, I long since made up my mind. Even if everyone else managed to escape, I would stay behind. If our sect goes down in flames, I will go with it!

“Isn’t it the same with you, Xiaochun...? Back in that battle in the Luochen Mountains, why did you go back to save your fellow disciples? Didn’t you know that if you went back, you might die?

“What would have happened if, instead of facing three devas earlier, it was three demigods...? Would you have come to fight? Or would you have lingered in the distance, watched us die, and

then fled?”

The words struck Bai Xiaochun’s heart like a lightning bolt. He had never thought of questions like this before, and wasn’t even sure how to answer them. The truth was that in the sect’s moment of impending doom, he hadn’t been thinking of anything. He just couldn’t stand to watch it be wiped out in front of him, and had felt he had no choice but to advance into battle.

As he pondered these matters, he was suddenly struck by a revelation. Although his focus in life was to live forever... there were too many other things in the world he cared about. He couldn’t simply forget about those things, and that meant that, even if he didn’t like it, sometimes he had to resort to fighting and killing. It was like a natural law of heaven and earth.

When danger threatened his friends, his family, his sect, or his home, then it didn’t matter how much he wanted to live forever. He would always do the same thing!

He would always make the same choice!

“Life and death....” Considering how many years Patriarch Spirit Stream had lived, and the state of his longevity, when he talked about life and death, it somehow seemed more meaningful.

“Sometimes, you might be alive... and yet be dead to certain people....

“And sometimes, you might be dead, and yet be alive.... Zhou Xinqi perished, but she lives for all time in Shangguan Tianyou's heart! That black dog is dead, but exists eternally for Beihan Lie!

“Look at all the names on these graves, Xiaochun. These disciples died in battle, but from now on, everyone in the River-Defying Sect will remember them! Who will ever dare to forget them!?” Patriarch Spirit Stream spoke with decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron. His words were like a thunderclap that resonated in Bai Xiaochun’s mind and heart, causing a tremor to

pass through him. It was almost as if a door had been opened inside of him, making certain thoughts and feelings which had once been obscured to suddenly be as clear as day.

His eyes flickered with enlightenment at the profound implications of the words which had just been spoken. He suddenly felt as if he understood the meaning of life and death, and also understood why he would always make that one particular choice. It was because... of focus!

Although grief still existed in his heart, the more he thought about his new understanding, the more that grief resembled respect. Then he clasped hands and bowed deeply to all of the graves! Even after a long moment, he didn't rise from his bow.

"I understand now, Patriarch...." he murmured. He was bowing to those who had died in battle, to their sacrifice, to their fearlessness. He was bowing... to the souls of true heroes!

As long as the sect existed... then these disciples who had fallen in battle would live in the hearts of the sect, for all eternity!

They had died, but would exist for all time!

Chapter 879: Que'er! What Are You Doing Here?

Upon seeing that Bai Xiaochun's reservations had been cleared up, a smile broke out on Patriarch Spirit Stream's face. The truth was that he cared very much for Bai Xiaochun, and not just because of how he had just defeated the three enemy devas.

Bai Xiaochun was the heart and the soul of the River-Defying Sect. It didn't matter that the Spirit and Blood Stream Divisions were now fully integrated; there was no one who could replace Bai Xiaochun!

Most importantly, Bai Xiaochun had the most orthodox and proper background within the Spirit Stream Division!

All of a sudden, the patriarch seemed to remember something. "Xiaochun, you were missing for a long time in the Wildlands. Now that you're back, I have to ask: did you hear about the matter of the Celestial selecting a new apprentice?"

"The Celestial is picking a new apprentice?" Bai Xiaochun said, a look of shock appearing on his face.

The patriarch nodded. "Even I'm not too familiar with what happens in this situation. However, the entire affair should be kicking off soon. All four of the riversource sects are making preparations.

"According to what I heard, any Nascent Soul cultivator can join the running. As long as they're from the Heavenspan River region, it doesn't matter if they belong to a sect, a clan, or even if they're a rogue cultivator. All Nascent Soul cultivators qualify to go to Heavenspan Island!" Patriarch Spirit Stream sighed. Considering how old he was, he knew that he wasn't suitable for such a position. After all, there was no shortage of Nascent Soul cultivators in the Heavenspan River region.

For one Nascent Soul cultivator to beat so many others to win a spot would be like a mortal being able to ascend to the heavens!

However, there was hope for Bai Xiaochun. Despite the fact that he could clearly defeat almost anyone else in his generation, he clearly had not yet become a deva.

Despite being merely a half-deva, he had killed one true deva, crippled another, and forced a third to flee. Patriarch Spirit Stream had never heard of anything like that happening in the eastern Heavenspan River, and although he couldn't be sure if something as heaven-defying had occurred in the other three major rivers, he knew it was definitely unprecedented.

This was Bai Xiaochun's first time hearing about the Celestial taking a new apprentice, but all it did was cause him to shake his head. Because of what he had witnessed in that spectacular battle in the Wildlands, he just didn't have a very good impression of the Celestial....

The mention of the Celestial immediately got him thinking about Hou Xiaomei, so he asked the patriarch about her.

"Hou Xiaomei and Ghostfang were both taken to Heavenspan Island about a decade ago, along with several thousand others. That was accomplished, not by battle, but by assessment of talent and other factors. Hou Xiaomei apparently had unusual talent in certain areas. Assuming she follows instructions and excels in cultivation, she'll have a chance to become a special guard there!

"This sort of thing only happens once every few hundred years. Out of those 10,000 cultivators, only a few hundred will end up as special guards." Patriarch Spirit Stream clearly didn't know a lot about the situation, but obviously had high hopes for the outcome. At the moment, there was a lot of work to do to get the River-Defying Sect back in order, and therefore, Patriarch Spirit Stream turned to leave.

As he did, he recalled how close Hou Xiaomei and Bai Xiaochun

were, and looked back to say, “If you want more details, you should go ask Song Junwan. The selection formalities occurred in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and Song Junwan was there as well. Unfortunately, she wasn’t selected.”

Bai Xiaochun nodded, choosing to keep his reservations about the Celestial to himself. It wasn’t that he didn’t trust Patriarch Spirit Stream, it was just that his suspicions were too shocking. Still feeling a bit unsettled about the whole thing, he took another moment to look out at the graves, then took a deep breath and left.

Before long, it was evening, and a bright moon hung high in the sky. Most of the disciples of the River-Defying Sect were practicing cultivation. After all, the repair work couldn’t be completed in a day, and they needed time to recover from the weariness of battle.

It was at this time that Bai Xiaochun finally took the opportunity to go find Song Junwan. On the one hand, he had been missing her badly for years, and on the other hand, he also wanted to find out more about what happened to Hou Xiaomei.

Song Junwan had finally taken a break, and was in her immortal's cave, recovering from her weariness with medicinal pills. However, there was one person who went to see her before Bai Xiaochun. And that was Song Que.

Considering that Song Que was a chosen of the Song Clan, it was only natural that Song Junwan was very concerned about him. And the fact that he was now in the Nascent Soul stage was wonderful for the clan.

Despite the fact that Song Junwan held seniority over Song Que, as soon as he arrived, she rose to her feet to meet him. However, Song Que didn’t dare to rely on his cultivation base to act like the ranking cultivator. Hurrying forward, he said, “There’s no need for that, Aunt Junwan. Que’er has come to offer greetings.”

Acting with the utmost courtesy, he clasped hands and bowed, just like he had back when his cultivation base was far inferior to

hers.

Song Junwan was very pleased with how circumspect he was being. However, that didn't stop her from offering some advice.

“Que’er, now that you have a Nascent Soul, it’s only proper for me to receive you formally. Although we can’t forget matters of protocol, in the cultivation world, strength demands respect.”

Song Que smiled bitterly, reminding himself that if it weren’t for Bai Xiaochun, things would be very different. Considering that he was very close to the mid Nascent Soul stage, everyone in his clan with the exception of the patriarch himself would bow in greeting to him.

However... considering who Song Junwan was, and her relationship with Bai Xiaochun, Song Que had no choice but to suppress his bitterness. Although he was a bit pleased to see how depressed Bai Xiaochun was recently, he didn’t dare to reveal that openly. Not only had his time in the Wildlands forced him to grow up a bit, but it had also instilled a deep reverence for Bai Xiaochun that even he wouldn’t admit existed.

Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun had repeatedly brought up the matter of himself being Song Que’s uncle. Because of that, matters of seniority relating to Song Junwan were far from simple.

If it weren’t for that, his first visit wouldn’t have been to Song Junwan, but rather, to the Song Clan patriarch.

“There’s no need for that, Aunt Junwan. In your eyes, ma’am, Que’er will always be the same boy he was years ago.” With that, Song Que took a deep breath and then bowed formally to Song Junwan.

Song Junwan’s smile grew wider, and her eyes warmer. She was proud that a qilin son like this had risen up in the clan, and immediately asked him about his adventures in the Wildlands.

In response, he hemmed and hawed, giving a vague, awkward

recounting of what happened after he went missing. If it had been anyone else, he would have acted a bit more arrogantly. But right now, he wasn't quite sure how to behave around Song Junwan.

Song Junwan could tell that something was off about Song Que. She frowned, which made her seem both more beautiful, and also more grim. Just when she was about to ask some more pointed questions, she heard Bai Xiaochun's voice outside the immortal's cave.

“Wan'er, my darling,” he said passionately, “I'm back!”

The instant his voice entered the immortal's cave, Song Que's heart began to pound. As for Song Junwan, her face flushed, and her eyes flickered with a bit of anger. For him to act romantically with her in front of someone from the younger generation not only caused her heart to start racing, it was also a bit embarrassing. She quickly waved her hand, causing the immortal's cave door to slam open.

Bai Xiaochun strode in and immediately saw Song Que.

“Eee?! Que'er! What are you doing here?”

Song Que's face darkened.

When Song Junwan saw Song Que's expression, she suddenly looked a bit apologetic. She knew that it was partly her fault that Bai Xiaochun was treating Song Que like this, and was about to say something when Bai Xiaochun cut her off.

“Wan'er, you have no idea what kind of place the Wildlands is. It's incredibly dangerous. Deadly situations crop up no matter where you go. In order to save Que'er, I almost revealed my secret identity! I even offended a bunch of aristocrats, and ended up shaking down some heavenly marquis clans!

“Did you hear that? Heavenly marquises! The Wildlands is huge, but they only have 108 of them. Every single one is a really important and famous person!” Sighing in reminiscence, he

thought back to the heavy price he had paid to rescue Song Que.

“I’ll never forget how bad of a situation Que’er was in when I first found him out there in the Wildlands. He was poked full of so many holes he looked like a sieve! One of those heavenly marquis clans had turned him into a living spirit stone!

“Do you know what a living spirit stone is, Wan’er? They force them to eat all kinds of medicinal pills and stuff, forcing their qi passageways to expand. That increases their cultivation base, which they then force to rotate, sending cultivation base power through all the holes they poked in them. That in turn creates a small area abundant in spiritual energy!

“And then... that clan’s junior generation can practice cultivation without any spirit stones!” Bai Xiaochun’s vivid description caused Song Que to involuntarily think back to the dark times of the past. At the same time, Song Junwan gasped, and her expression turned grim.

“That’s outrageous!” she said furiously. She looked over at the bitter expression on Song Que’s face, and could tell that Bai Xiaochun was not exaggerating. All of a sudden, she realized why Song Que had been stumbling for words earlier.

“Thank you for what you did, Xiaochun!!” she said. Earlier, she had intended to prevent Bai Xiaochun from saying anything to Song Que. Instead, she looked at him emotionally, and then gave a curtsying bow at the waist.

“There’s no need for all the formality!” Bai Xiaochun replied. “I did all of that for you, after all.” Clearing his throat, he stepped forward, slipped his arm around her supple waist, and then thumped himself on the chest. “You’re Que’er’s aunt, and I’m his uncle. We’re family! If I didn’t help him out there in the Wildlands, who would? If I didn’t save him, who would? It was the proper thing to do, and not a big deal at all.”

Although Song Junwan’s face turned scarlet, she didn’t push him

away. In fact, her expression softened. Before, she had felt as if they were growing apart, but now, with his hand around her waist, that feeling was gone.

Chapter 880: See What This Is, Xiaochun?

When Song Que saw the entranced look on his aunt's face when she looked at Bai Xiaochun, he sighed. By this point, he regretted coming early to visit. The truth was that if he had known Bai Xiaochun would show up, he would rather have been beaten to death than come at this time.

Although in some ways he wished he could do something to interfere with Bai Xiaochun's skills in seducing women, he also couldn't help but admire him a bit because of it.

He had been there to hear all the details Bai Xiaochun had explained about the Win Character Enchantment, which helped Zhao Tianjiao win over Chen Yueshan. And Song Que had also been there to witness the confusing relationship that had developed between Bai Xiaochun and Mistress Red-Dust.

And that wasn't even mentioning Chen Manyao....

Now that he thought about it, all of the most beautiful female cultivators seemed to be in some sort of relationship or another with Bai Xiaochun.... In the end, Song Que could only sigh and muse about how the heavens apparently favored Bai Xiaochun....

He considered revealing the truth to his aunt, and telling her about Chen Manyao and Mistress Red-Dust. But then he realized that Bai Xiaochun was giving him a glare of warning, and his heart seized up. Sighing, he looked at the entranced expression on his aunt's face, and finally realized that it was a really awkward situation. After blurting out a random excuse, he left.

Outside, he felt much better. Shaking his head, he noticed some nearby Blood Stream Division disciples looking at him. At that point, he straightened up, feeling the pride that a chosen Nascent Soul cultivator should feel. The disciples bowed in greeting, and his confidence began to return.

Bai Xiaochun and Song Junwan were now alone in her immortal's cave. It was a rare situation. Before, the fighting had been fierce in the battle, but now that they were together, Song Junwan abandoned any attempts to prevent her feelings from showing.

That was especially true considering what Bai Xiaochun had told her about Song Que's situation, and how much danger he had faced to rescue him.

Song Junwan could tell that Bai Xiaochun had done all of those things for her sake. And in the end, he had brought Song Que back, not only safe, but also having broken through to the Nascent Soul stage.

Gaze warm, she smoothed out some of the wrinkles in his garment, and spoke some sincere words of concern. Considering they were now alone, most of the flush had left her face.

Bai Xiaochun felt very relaxed in her presence, and could tell how much she cared for him. Eventually they sat down on a divan, whereupon Bai Xiaochun began to brag about some of the details of how he'd rescued Song Que.

Of course, he emphasized his own role in the situation, making sure it was clear that without him, Song Que would probably never have escaped. The entire time, he kept on measuring up Song Junwan.

Although they hadn't seen each other for years, Song Junwan was as spectacularly beautiful as ever. Her makeup was applied perfectly, emphasizing eyebrows that curved as gracefully as willow leaves. Her eyes glittered like pools of deep water, making it seem as if she were waiting for him to guess what she was thinking. Bai Xiaochun's heart suddenly began to race.

Song Junwan was curvaceous and smoking hot, with mouth-watering curves everywhere. There was something shockingly bewitching about her, especially considering how provocatively

she dressed. Bai Xiaochun swallowed a few times, marveling inwardly at what a vixen she was. Without even thinking about it, he began to compare her to Mistress Red-Dust, and eventually sighed in the realization that in terms of physique and beauty, Song Junwan clearly came out on top.

Suddenly, he realized something. After being thrown down onto the ground in the jungle by Mistress Red-Dust, a new world had opened up to him....

When Song Junwan realized that Bai Xiaochun was secretly checking her out, her heart began to beat more rapidly. A flirtatious expression appeared on her face, and she looked at him closely, pretending she hadn't noticed the look in his eyes. She also leaned forward a bit, revealing even more curves than before.

However, after a long moment, it was clear that Bai Xiaochun was merely looking at her, and wasn't going to make a move. A spark of anger rose up in her heart, quenching some of her passion. A cold expression even appeared on her face.

"Well," she said primly, "since there's nothing better to do, I guess I'll go meditate."

Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened in shock. Everything had been going well moments ago, to the point where Song Junwan seemed gripped by passion. But in the blink of an eye, it all changed. It was very strange. Suddenly, he realized that asking about Hou Xiaomei right now probably wouldn't be the best idea....

Blinking a few times, he decided to feel the situation out.

"Well, I guess I'll head out?"

Heart burning with anger that she couldn't control, Song Junwan glared at him for a moment, and then let out a cold harrumph. "See yourself out!"

Bai Xiaochun was really confused. Sighing, he mused that women were definitely very strange creatures, both Mistress Red-Dust and

Song Junwan alike.

“Could it be that all older women are like this?” Convinced that this was the case, he decided that he really missed Hou Xiaomei. She was definitely the most well-behaved of them all.

Rubbing his nose, he rose to his feet and said, “Well, I guess I really will take off!”

As he did, Song Junwan closed her eyes and ignored him.

Bai Xiaochun’s awkwardness was now starting to turn into a bit of anger. Flicking his sleeve, he turned to walk off. However, he only got about seven or eight steps before Song Junwan’s voice rang out.

“How long are you going to stick around this time?”

In no mood to deal with her antics, he replied, “Oh, I don’t know. After all the sect matters are taken care of, I need to take a trip to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.”

Then he continued on his way.

Song Junwan opened her eyes and looked at him walking away. As of this moment, she realized that, considering Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation base and talent, it wasn’t reasonable to expect him to stay in the River-Defying Sect forever, even if it was his home. Furthermore, she couldn’t help but wonder... after he left, how long would it be before she saw him again?

When she thought about that, and about how distant he had seemed when she caught sight of him on the battlefield, she began to struggle inwardly. If she couldn’t hold on to him right now... then as time passed, they would grow further apart, and their relationship would definitely cool. Eventually, it would probably become nothing more than a memory.

The sect had faced many dramatic situations over the years, and she had seen many couples parted by death. Besides, she had no idea if she would be able to break out from the Core Formation

stage and into the Nascent Soul stage, which meant that she had no idea how long she would actually live.

The only thing she knew was that, over all the years, Bai Xiaochun was the only person to have tantalized her without sickening her. After everything that had gone on between the two of them, he was the one person she could never stop thinking about.

At that point, the struggle in her eyes transformed into determination. She was the devilwitch of the Blood Stream Sect, not a member of the righteous and orthodox Spirit Stream Sect!

As her hesitation vanished, decisiveness enveloped her. She stretched out on the divan, making sure every inch of her beautiful figure was on display. Then she spoke in a voice that would stab deep into the heart of anyone who heard it.

“Xiaochun, come here. I want to show you something.”

As soon as her voice entered his ears, it felt like a hand had grabbed onto his heart. After shivering for a moment, he snorted coldly.

“Whatever it is, I don’t want to see it!” Those were the words which left his mouth, and yet, he stopped walking, and even turned around, to see Song Junwan reclined sultrily on the divan. His heart began to pound even harder. However, he reminded himself that in the face of a vixen like this, he had to control himself and act like normal.

Eyes glittering, she beckoned at him with her finger. “Be a good boy, now. Why won’t you come over here? I’m not going to bite you!”

Heart racing, Bai Xiaochun gave another cold snort. Glaring, he strode over to her, stuck his chin up, and loudly said, “Me? Afraid of you?! I think not. Alright. What do you want to show me?”

Covering a smile with her hand, she looked up at him, snagging

his gaze as surely as if with a hook. Even as he gasped in surprise, she patted her bag of holding, producing a medicinal pill which she held up in two fingers.

“Do you see what this is?”

Bai Xiaochun’s jaw dropped, a bit displeased that this was what Song Junwan wanted to show him.... It turned out it was just a medicinal pill. Sighing, he looked a bit closer, drawing upon his skill in the Dao of medicine to identify it.

“Oh, it’s an Aphrodisiac Pill. Hey, how did you get--” Suddenly he gasped, and thought back to Mistress Red-Dust.

And yet, before he could do anything... a flush spread out across Song Junwan's face, and her eyes flashed as...

She crushed the pill!

Chapter 881: This Is My First Time!

Poof!

When Song Junwan crushed the Aphrodisiac Pill, it made a very familiar sound, a sound which stabbed into Bai Xiaochun's ears and went deep into his mind.

Pink mist roiled out in all directions, enveloping both him and Song Junwan before he could even react.

“Aaaiiiieeee!” Without even thinking about it, he began to back away, but before he could take more than a few steps, a bewitching, soft, and curvaceous form grabbed him.

He suddenly realized that somewhere deep inside of him was a profound sense of anticipation. Blinking, he shouted, “No, don't...! Wait, Wan'er! What are you doing? Aaagh! Don't tear my clothes off! This is my first time...!”

His shrieks were particularly exaggerated, and although he seemed to be struggling to fight against the effects of the pink mist, he obviously wasn't putting much heart into it.

The main thing he was afraid of was that Song Junwan would figure out what had occurred between him and Mistress Red-Dust back in the Wildlands.... Suddenly, he screamed with renewed fervor.

“Stop it! At least let me get ready....” Piteous wails erupted from within the mist, but clearly, he was just putting on a show. The look in his eyes and the way he held himself actually made it easier for Song Junwan to tear his clothing off....

Panting, Song Junwan said, “Shut up! This is exactly what I want! Your first time!”

Along with her words came the brutal sound of clothing being torn. At that point, Bai Xiaochun's shrieking ceased, and a sharp intake of breath could be heard from Song Junwan. And then... the

mist began to seethe and burn.

Two hours went by....

When the mist vanished, Song Junwan seemed to be thinking clearly again. Her clothing was back on, but a deep flush covered her face. Next to her was Bai Xiaochun, an expression on his face that was a mixture of pride and tenderness. Arms wrapped around his knees, he looked off into space.

The expression on his face was very pleasing to Song Junwan. In fact, if he had looked any other way, she might have become suspicious. Adjusting her clothing, she smiled and said, "Alright, hurry up and put some clothes on. Don't worry, I'm not going to abandon you now or something."

The truth was that Bai Xiaochun's daze was only thirty percent real and seventy percent a show.... He didn't dare to do anything other than look like he was in a daze. Otherwise, Song Junwan might have guessed at the truth. In his mind, he was comparing Song Junwan and Mistress Red-Dust.

In the end, he decided that both of them were perfect. One was wild and barbaric, the other was shockingly beautiful. The truth was that all sorts of different flowers had their upsides.

However, he kept a strange look on his face, and after a bit of thought, even shivered a few times to make it really seem like it was his first time....

Inside, he was sighing endlessly at the fact that, twice in a row, he had been trapped by an Aphrodisiac Pill....

"Is the Aphrodisiac Pill the bane of my existence?! If there was a first time, and a second time, does that mean there will be a third, fourth, and fifth time...?" Although it was somewhat of a dismal thought, for some reason... he actually looked forward to it....

Song Junwan was completely pleased by the strange look on Bai Xiaochun's face. Patting her bag of holding, she produced a new set

of clothing, which she handed over to him. Considering the blank look that was on his face, she offered a few tender words and then helped him get dressed.

Of course, although the blank look remained on his face, inside he was feeling wonderful, and couldn't help but marvel at the wonderful act he was putting on.

At the same time, he kept wondering why he was so outstanding. If he weren't, why would Mistress Red-Dust and Song Junwan have both intentionally used an Aphrodisiac Pill to bewitch him?

"I can't blame them. I can only blame my outstanding nature." Having reached this point in his train of thought, he sighed helplessly at his amazing qualities.

Feeling prouder of herself than ever, Song Junwan rubbed his shoulder and offered some more tender words. It was at that point that Bai Xiaochun finally broached the subject of Hou Xiaomei.

Earlier, Song Junwan might have answered such questions, but would have felt somewhat uncomfortable doing so. Now, considering how pleased she was, she didn't mind at all, and explained everything she knew.

Several thousand cultivators from the River-Defying Sect had gone to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to participate in the selection process. In total, there were tens of thousands from the eastern Heavenspan River who had participated in the trial.

Song Junwan hadn't passed the test. And in fact, of all the other River-Defying Sect disciples, only Ghostfang had succeeded. However, during the talent portion of the assessment, Hou Xiaomei was shown to be particularly suited to the divine abilities and magical techniques of Heavenspan Island.

Therefore, both she and Ghostfang had proceeded on to Heavenspan Island. Actually, Hou Xiaomei wasn't the only one to receive such treatment. According to Song Junwan, there were a

total of eight other disciples who had been selected because of how well they conformed to certain legacy magical techniques.

When Bai Xiaochun heard that Hou Xiaomei was one of several disciples to go to Heavenspan Island, he felt a bit better about the situation. And he felt even better when Song Junwan pointed out that such arrangements had been made many times throughout history. In fact, it had been this way for thousands of years. Furthermore, most cultivators who served as special guards on Heavenspan Island eventually returned to their home sects.

“Maybe I'm just worrying too much....”

Having received all of this information, he looked over at Song Junwan and noticed how exhausted she seemed. In fact, both of them seemed to be a bit out of sorts.... Clearing his throat, he offered some words of departure.

Before leaving, though, he gave her a deva soul!

He had never been able to collect another full set of five deva souls. However, even only one of the souls he had could be considered a precious treasure in the Heavenspan River region.

One of those souls could be traded into a sect for a set of deva beast souls, and would be of immense help to Song Junwan when it came time for her to create her nascent soul. Furthermore, if she succeeded, she would have a nascent soul that put her on the same level as the chosen from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

It would definitely be beneficial to her cultivation!

Song Junwan was completely shaken by the gift. It was the first time in her life that she had ever laid hands on something so precious. She looked up at Bai Xiaochun, the entrancement in her eyes growing deeper. She didn't try to persuade him to stay. However, when he turned to leave, she walked over and embraced him.

The feeling of her soft curves pressing into him caused Bai

Xiaochun's heart to start racing again. Although he had just gone through an incredible experience, being held by her immediately caused him to recall everything that had just happened. Worried that he might reveal some information he didn't want to, he mumbled a few words and then hurried away.

Outside of the immortal's cave, he felt his heart still pounding, and muttered a few more times about how much of a vixen she was. Sighing, he realized that he really had changed....

This time, he wasn't nearly as depressed as he had been the last time.

"Wait. No. No way! I can't be like this. Oh, and I definitely can't let Hou Xiaomei find out!" Having reached this point in his train of thought, he suddenly started wondering if Hou Xiaomei had somehow come across an Aphrodisiac Pill. If not, then perhaps he would need to figure out a way to make sure she did....

"Hold on. No! How could Bai Xiaochun be a person like that!?" After all, he was a very pure person, and therefore, such thinking didn't befit him.

Eventually, he looked up into the sky and sighed.

"Why? Why am I so outstanding!?"

Sighing, he made his way to the immortal's cave that had been prepared for him. Once inside, he sat down cross-legged and got his thoughts under control.

"It's hard to say where the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect stands when it comes to the River-Defying Sect. To be safe... I really need to become a deva as soon as possible...." At that point, his eyes lit up with determination. "I need to conjure a twenty-one colored flame!"

Chapter 882: The Fury of Devas

Bai Xiaochun had killed one deva, crippled another, and forced the third to flee. Because of that, he could tell that the issues facing the River-Defying Sect... were not yet fully resolved. Although he had temporarily ended the crisis, the truth was that everything could be traced back to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

Without the tacit approval of the riversource sect, the other three great sects would never have dared to try to exterminate the River-Defying Sect.... Perhaps few people in the sect understood the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect well, but Bai Xiaochun had spent a lot of time there, and was very familiar with its inner workings.

For example, there were five deva patriarchs in the sect. One of them was from the Hall of Steel Veins, but the other four were powerful experts connected to the four river branches!

For example, there was the child-like deva who controlled the Sky Quarter. The other branches all had deva patriarchs who watched over them, and were connected to them in numerous ways. Oftentimes, clan interests played a factor. The truth was that the Middle Reaches sects were all extensions of the power bases of those devas.

The moment the River-Defying Sect became part of the Middle Reaches, they began to pay tribute to the child deva. In fact, their tribute surpassed that which had been paid in the past by the Sky River Court.

From that, it was easy to ascertain that the actions of the three sects against the River-Defying Sect was not a war of incursion... but rather, a game being played amongst the devas of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Also... the child patriarch from Sky Quarter was in a weak position, and wasn't capable of contending with the other three devas.

In the end, he was essentially forced to abandon the River-

Defying Sect, which led to the situation of three devas joining forces to exterminate the sect.

Although Bai Xiaochun had appeared and decimated the alliance of three sects, the truth was that the figurative slaps he had unleashed actually landed on the faces of the other three devas in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

It was easy to imagine that the result would be nothing good. The other three devas would surely be infuriated, and would come to unleash their wrath!

Such an outcome had never been Bai Xiaochun's aim, and yet, in the face of sect-wide calamity, he had been presented with no other choice.

"I hope the fact that I rescued Chen Hetian's apprentice and daughter will prevent him from going overboard....

"And I sure hope that Bai Lin's grandfather remembers how close I am to his grandson..." Bai Xiaochun rubbed the bridge of his nose. The truth was that he couldn't rely on anyone else, and he knew it. The only thing that could ensure the safety of the River-Defying Sect was to make it as strong as possible.

"I have to become a deva!" Bai Xiaochun was already feeling under a lot of pressure. After all, the only true way to resolve the situation... was for him to reach the Deva Realm!

With a deva cultivation base, his battle prowess would be even more significant. With that level of strength, he could strike fear into the hearts of his opponents, and truly protect the River-Defying Sect!

As he sat there in his private chamber, eyes shining with determination, he pulled out the formula for twenty-one-colored flame and began to study it closely. The formula required a huge amount of resources, something even more daunting considering he was now in the Heavenspan River region. Thankfully, his

apprentice Bai Hao had given him plenty of souls to work with before he left the Wildlands.

He currently even had enough souls to cover numerous failures.

In the blink of an eye, several days passed. Bai Xiaochun had already slipped into his usual maddened state. His hair was disheveled, but he didn't care. His mind and heart were completely immersed in the formula for twenty-one-colored flame; he had analyzed every single step and every procedure, down to the minutia.

Perhaps it was because of the pressure he felt, or perhaps something else, but either way, he had exploded into action, and his thoughts raced from one aspect of the formula to another. Furthermore, because he had access to plenty of the spiritual power of heaven and earth, he was able to work continuously without stopping at all. To keep in top shape, he would occasionally consume medicinal pills provided by the River-Defying Sect.

As time passed, he grew more and more familiar with the formula. Three more days passed, whereupon Bai Xiaochun waved his hands, summoning a large quantity of souls to begin his first attempt!

He was under no illusions that he would succeed on this attempt. What he wanted was not success, but the experience that came with failure.

Progress through practice led to shocking results, and was something that Bai Xiaochun alone was able to accomplish. No other necromancers would be able to sustain the unimaginable cost.

After all, Bai Xiaochun's apprentice was the Hell-Emperor, which enabled him to go to extravagant lengths when working on flame conjuring.

Time slipped by slowly but surely. With each failure he experienced, his understanding deepened. Occasionally he would stop, analyze, and make adjustments. Although he looked physically exhausted, his eyes only continued to shine more and more brightly.

As he slipped more and more deeply into flame conjuring, the very things he had worried would happen in the outside world began to happen. Word about the River-Defying Sect's spectacular comeback, and Bai Xiaochun's fight with the three devas, began to spread. All cultivators in the Middle Reaches were completely shaken, and stories even began to spread in the Lower Reaches and the delta regions.

Of course, there was little need to mention the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Many individuals there had heard reports of what had happened, leading to widespread shock and astonishment.

It was around that time that Patriarch Dao River, the one who had lost his fleshly body, decided to throw caution to the wind. He contacted Patriarch Starry River, and the two of them rushed to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect along with a Nascent Soul elder from the Polarity River Court.

They were struck with fear by the presence of Bai Xiaochun, but at the same time, couldn't get over their jealousy and anger. As soon as the three powerful experts reached the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, they split up and went to find the powerful patriarchs associated with their various sects.

The patriarch associated with the Dao River Court was none other than Chen Hetian, Master of Zhao Tianjiao. He had been in secluded meditation, but when he heard about the matter with the River-Defying Sect, and the news of Bai Xiaochun, his first reaction was that the stories were simply too unbelievable!

However, as more and more accounts began to spread, he came to realize the truth of the matter, and his anger burned!

Although he remembered Bai Xiaochun, he had never cared too much about him. In fact, not even the fact that he had been involved with the rescue of his own apprentice and daughter counted for much with him. Chen Hetian was the arrogant type who was always condescending toward others.

Back when everyone had been teleported out into the Wildlands, Chen Hetian had gone to great lengths to find his apprentice and daughter. Eventually, he had succeeded. As far as Bai Xiaochun went, though, he completely ignored him.

But now, he had to dredge up that name which he had so long been buried in the depths of his memory. The fact that Bai Xiaochun now possessed such shocking battle prowess caused him to frown.

Even as he pondered those matters, the crippled Patriarch Dao River arrived. Looking profoundly wronged, he clasped hands and bowed deeply to Chen Hetian.

“Senior, please help me!!”

He was a deva expert who Chen Hetian had entrusted with defending a Middle Reaches sect. But now, he only existed in nascent divinity form, a fact that caused Chen Hetian’s face to turn very grim. A windstorm of anger was already brewing inside of him as he asked, “Just what exactly happened!?”

Even as the words left his mouth, shocking pressure weighed down in all directions.

Patriarch Dao River’s nascent divinity shivered, and he quickly began to recount the details of the battle, not holding back anything.

When Chen Hetian heard that Bai Xiaochun hadn’t defeated all three patriarchs at the same time, but rather successively, he snorted coldly.

From his perspective, Patriarch Dao River and the other Middle

Reaches devas were all Mortal-Dao devas, essentially the weakest of all types of devas.

Chen Hetian had reached the Nascent Soul stage with deva beast souls, which had enabled him to then reach the Earth-Dao Deva Realm. Because of that, it would be a simple matter for him to beat those same three devas by fighting them in succession.

Trembling, Patriarch Dao River paused for a moment, and then said, “This Bai Xiaochun is completely outrageous! He even went so far as to take advantage of my absence to loot all of the wealth in the Dao River Court...! There was tribute in there that I had amassed for you, sir....”

When Chen Hetian heard that, his eyes flashed with cold light.

“What gall this dog has!” he said in an icy voice. “Is he looking to die?!” With that, he sent his divine sense out to contact the deva patriarchs in Starry Quarter and Polarity Quarter.

As far as he was concerned, the person in the worst position because of everything wasn’t himself, but rather... the patriarch from Polarity Quarter, whose subordinate had been killed!

Chapter 883: The Hall of Steel Veins Mobilizes!

The patriarch from Polarity Quarter was none other than... Bai Lin's grandfather!

His name was Bai Zhentian, and he had a cultivation base that could shake heaven and earth, as well as a very bad temper. Flames currently danced in his eyes as he stared at the Nascent Soul elder from the Polarity River Court, who was trembling physically as he prostrated in front of him.

“So, you’re telling me that the rumors are all true? And the patriarch of your Polarity River Court was the most useless of all and got killed?”

Shivering in fear, the elder replied, “It was all because of Patriarch Starry River! He--”

Before he could continue with his explanation, Bai Zhentian interrupted him with a furious shout, “Screw off!”

The rainbow outside trembled, and the elder tumbled backward, blood spraying out of his mouth as he was flung out of Bai Zhentian's residence.

It was roughly at that time that Chen Hetian's divine sense reached out, projecting his sinister voice into Bai Zhentian's ears.

“Brother Bai, how do you want to handle this situation?!”

“How do I want to handle it?” Bai Zhentian replied coldly. “We’ll make that bastard pay with his life!”

At the moment, Bai Zhentian didn't care at all about what his grandson Bai Lin thought about the situation. When it came to matters pertaining to the clan as a whole, it didn't matter that Bai Zhentian liked Bai Lin. He couldn't just ignore a threat because of Bai Lin's feelings.

The truth was that when Bai Zhentian had given tacit approval for the Polarity River Court to attack the River-Defying Sect, Bai Lin had come to protest, and the two of them had a huge argument about the matter.

The same thing had happened with Chen Hetian. Zhao Tianjiao and his Daoist partner Chen Yueshan had come to beg him to change his mind, but in the end, he had ignored them.

Now that something dramatic had occurred, there was no way that Chen Hetian and Bai Zhentian would let the matter drop!

“Count me in!” came an ancient voice, transmitted through divine sense to Chen Hetian and Bai Zhentian.

It was none other than the patriarch from Starry Quarter. He was the grandfather of Li Yuansheng and the ultimate backer of the Celestial Sky Society. His name was Li Xiandao!

Bai Xiaochun’s actions against the three sects had affected his interests, and although the Starry River Court had incurred the least losses of all, it was not something that Li Xiandao could simply overlook.

After all... he had given tacit approval for the three sects to act. Furthermore, the alliance had been designed to suppress the child-deva from Sky Quarter. Therefore, how could Li Xiandao simply allow Bai Xiaochun to ruin everything?

“Very well,” Chen Hetian said, his eyes flickering with cold light. “Since you agree, Brother Li, then there’s no time to lose. After all, we’ve had Fellow Daoist Li Yuantian suppressed for years now. We don’t want him to get any thoughts now.”

Among the five devas of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, [there were two with the surname Li](#). However, they didn't come from the same clan!

In response to Bai Zhentian’s words, Li Xiandao nodded. Then, the three of them communicated a bit more, whereupon powerful

deva fluctuations erupted from the rainbows of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

Li Xiandao, Bai Zhentian and Chen Hetian all became bright beams of light which shot off into the distance. Following them were the patriarchs of the Dao and Starry River Court. In total, there were five devas, three in the front, two in the back, streaking through the sky!

Their destination was the River-Defying Sect, and their intention... was to punish Bai Xiaochun!

The fact that five devas had burst out into the open caused quite a commotion in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Countless disciples were shaken, and many cries of alarm rang out.

“What’s going on!?”

“That was Patriarch Chen, Patriarch Bai and Patriarch Li... Then there were two other devas who I’m pretty sure are from Middle Reaches sects....”

Even as the disciples began to discuss the matter, Zhao Tianjiao shot up into the air, looking anxiously off into the distance after his Master. He too had heard that Bai Xiaochun was back, and that the River-Defying Sect had made a spectacular comeback.

He had already been feeling guilty about everything, so when he saw his Master and the other devas heading toward the River-Defying Sect, his heart began to pound with nervousness, and his eyes turned crimson.

“I don’t care what happens, Bai Xiaochun is my brother. He didn’t do anything wrong! Don’t tell me it’s against the rules to defend oneself! Don’t tell me it’s wrong to save your sect!” Shouting in anger, Zhao Tianjiao shot toward the River-Defying Sect. Although he knew he couldn’t do anything to stop his Master, he was determined to stand by Bai Xiaochun’s side!

His Daoist partner Chen Yueshan flew by his side, as resolute and

determined as him!

Even as Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan took off, someone else in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was reacting with complete madness to the situation. It was none other than Bai Lin!

When Bai Lin sensed that his grandfather was heading to the River-Defying Sect on a killing mission, Bai Lin's anger exploded.

"Bai Xiaochun is one of my major generals, grandfather! Maybe I couldn't do anything to stop you from trying to exterminate the River-Defying Sect when he was missing. But now that he's back, I can't believe you're going to do this.... Well... you're forcing my hand!" Bai Lin had a short temper to begin with, so once it sparked, he flew into the air... and headed toward the Hall of Steel Veins!

Bai Xiaochun wasn't just a subordinate of Bai Lin. He was also... a member of the Hall of Steel Veins! The major generals of the five legions were all part of the Hall of Steel Veins!

In the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, there were four devas attached to the four major branches of the river. But they weren't the only devas. There was another! He was... Patriarch Steel Veins, a person who took orders only from the sect's demigod patriarch!

It was impossible to say how Bai Lin went about making his report. However, moments later, fluctuations began to roll out that far surpassed those which had come from Chen Hetian and the other devas. The source: the Hall of Steel Veins!

At the same time, a middle-aged man appeared, clad in blood-colored armor that made him look like he had climbed mountains of corpses and swam through seas of blood to reach his current state.

"Summon the five legions!" he said coolly.

As his words echoed out through the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, countless figures suddenly appeared, speeding through the

air in his direction. Hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands.... Within the space of a few breaths of time, nearly 100,000 people appeared. They were none other than... the cultivators of the five legions!

Many of them personally knew Bai Xiaochun, and many had fought alongside him in battle. In fact, many of them had been part of the 10,000-man corps he led as a major general.

At the same time, Bai Lin also appeared, clad in a suit of armor, flanked by his fellow generals, all of them looking very grim.

Patriarch Steel Veins looked around, and then spoke in a voice that echoed like thunder into the ears of the tens of thousands of cultivators. “If someone wants to attack the River-Defying Sect, we can’t do anything about that. But when someone makes a move against a major general of the Hall of Steel Veins... is that something we can stand for?”

“Never!!” came the response, a swell of voices that shook the entire Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. With that, the patriarch waved his hand.

“Very well. Let’s go take a look... and see who dares to trifle with one of our major generals!”

Terrifying battle cries filled the sky as the massive army from the Hall of Steel Veins followed their patriarch into action.

The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was completely and utterly shaken by what they were seeing. Countless disciples looked up with shocked expressions....

“Something big is about to happen!!”

“River-Defying Sect? Bai Xiaochun? Wait, I remember. Bai Xiaochun used to be a major general at the Great Wall!!”

“This... this is a battle amongst devas!”

As everyone devolved into chaos, the child-deva sat in a private

chamber on Sky Quarter Rainbow, his eyes flickering with hesitation.

The truth was that he was actually the main reason all of this was happening, and at the moment, was weighing the pros and cons of taking action. In the end, he shook his head.

“Forget it. If I interfered and won, then it wouldn’t matter. But if I lost....” With that, he closed his eyes and went back to meditating, ignoring all of the clamor outside.

The truth was that he had long since abandoned the River-Defying Sect in his heart. As far as he was concerned, the fact that Bai Xiaochun had returned didn't mean anything. And from what he could tell, although the Hall of Steel Veins might protect Bai Xiaochun, they wouldn’t protect his sect.

Even if Bai Xiaochun could get out of the situation alive... the River-Defying Sect would not be able to escape.

Four of the five devas in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had taken action, causing the sky to fill with ripples.

Devas could move with incredible quickness, especially Chen Hetian and his companions. It didn’t take long before... they were in sight of the River-Defying Sect’s headquarters!

Chen Hetian and the other devas exchanged glances, and then began to transmit a conversation among themselves.

“It’s no surprise that the Hall of Steel Veins took action. But they can only do so much. Even if they save Bai Xiaochun, they can't get too involved with other sect affairs!!”

“Patriarch Steel Veins is just going through the motions. If he had come alone, he could have caught up with us already. The fact that he’s bringing the five legions with him shows that he’s actually giving us time to take care of things before he gets here.”

“Since he’s making a show of it, we should probably give him some face. Fine, let’s cripple Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation base, but

leave him alive. That should be fine!”

As you can see, the child-deva from Sky Quarter is also surnamed Li, but is from a different clan than Li Xiandao. Because of that, I think that, way back when, I erroneously came to the conclusion that Li Yuansheng was from that child-deva’s clan. I’m not sure if it was in a footnote, or in the narrative itself. I went back to search for that reference but couldn’t find it, so if anyone knows what I’m talking about, please respond to the comment I’m going to leave in the comment section.

Chapter 884: Black Clouds Gather!

It was evening, and the disciples of the River-Defying Sect were busy at their repair work. By now, the four mountain ranges that made up the sect headquarters were mostly back to normal. Buildings once again rose up near and far. Although traces of damage still existed, for the most part, the sect was on its way to a complete recovery.

Morale was very high. The sound of jovial laughter and conversation could be heard everywhere, and the entire sect seemed to thrum with life.

After fighting side-by-side, the four divisions had grown closer than ever, making the general atmosphere in the sect better than ever.

Nothing seemed out of place among the patriarchs, and yet, their hearts were weighed down by one looming fact. Their repeated attempts to contact the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had failed. Not even the child deva of the Sky Quarter had responded to them.

Patriarch Spirit Stream and the others were all very worried about what that meant. However, they didn't let that show, worried that the River-Defying Sect would fare badly if they knew that impending catastrophe loomed on the horizon.

“We can't let Xiaochun bear all the burden!” Patriarch Spirit Stream said.

The Nascent Soul patriarchs were currently in a grand hall in the sect, serious expressions on their faces as they discussed the matter. Of course, Patriarch Spirit Stream and Patriarch Blood Stream took the lead in the meeting.

In response to Patriarch Spirit Stream's words, Patriarch Blood Stream sat in silence for a moment, then said, “If worst comes to worst... we can always leave the Middle Reaches and go back to the

Lower Reaches!”

They wouldn't do such a thing unless there were no other options. However, there was no way to tell what the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was thinking at the moment, and therefore, they had to plan for the worst-case scenario.

Patriarch Blood Stream's words were met with silence in the grand hall. The only thing that could be heard was the laughing and chatting coming from the disciples outside.

That only served to emphasize the gravity of the situation. If things got worse, and the River-Defying Sect really did retreat from the Middle Reaches, it would be a devastating blow to both patriarchs and disciples alike.

Patriarch Spirit Stream sighed, and was just about to say something more, when a shadow blurred into the room. It was none other than the Spirit Stream Sect's monkey. Even as he took form, another shadowy form appeared, which was the Blood Stream Sect's rabbit!

Both of them began to speak in high-pitched tones, making it impossible to determine which of them began speaking first.

“Devas are invading!!”

“Activate the spell formation!!”

As the urgent voices of the monkey and rabbit echoed out, Patriarch Spirit Stream's face fell. Without the slightest hesitation, he performed an incantation gesture, activating the sect's defensive spell formation. Patriarch Blood Stream and the other two patriarchs offered assistance. In the blink of an eye, rumbling sounds filled the air in the sect's four mountain ranges. At the same time, shield after shield rose up to create defensive barriers.

The Dire Skybanyan, which had just been brought back from the brink of death, shivered. Magical symbols erupted from its leaves, and in the blink of an eye, green light shot out from it, creating

even more protective shields for the sect.

It all happened so quickly that, before the shocked disciples could react, the spell formation had been fully activated.... And that was when intense rumbling sounds could be heard as five beams of light shot toward the sect!

It was none other than Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian, followed by Patriarch Starry River and Patriarch Dao River!

The will of the five devas immediately spread out to fill heaven and earth, causing crackles of thunder to rip across the sky!

Their will replaced the will of the heavens, locking down the entire area and making it a world unto its own!

When the disciples of the River-Defying Sect saw the five figures up above, they gasped, and their faces fell!

“Patriarch Dao River!”

“That’s Patriarch Starry River!”

“I’ve never seen those other three... but their auras seem even more terrifying than the first two!!”

Shangguan Tianyou’s throat tightened, and Beihan Lie shivered. Song Que and the other chosen were immediately wracked with nervousness, as were Song Junwan and the other leaders in the sect.

Even with the spell formation activated, the pressure from the five devas was intense enough that everyone was left completely shaken.

The pressure was like mountain after mountain crushing down onto the hearts and minds of the disciples, stifling them and filling them with terror.

An anxious commotion broke out; everyone got the sense that disaster was pending. Patriarch Spirit Stream and Patriarch Blood

Stream were both half-devas, and were the strongest cultivators in the sect besides Bai Xiaochun. They both flew up toward the border of the spell formation, grim expressions on their faces as they faced the five devas.

None of the other disciples recognized Chen Hetian and his compatriots, but Patriarch Spirit Stream and Patriarch Blood Stream did.

Suppressing his anxiety, Patriarch Spirit Stream clasped hands and bowed. “Greetings Patriarchs Chen, Bai, and Li! Honored sirs, I’m not sure the reason for your visit, hopefully you can forgive any breaches in etiquette!”

Next to him, the equally nervous Patriarch Blood Stream similarly bowed in greeting.

When the River-Defying Sect disciples saw their two patriarchs acting so respectfully, it only caused their anxiety to grow.

As for Chen Hetian and the other two devas, they completely ignored the two River-Defying Sect patriarchs. Looking down coldly at the spell formation shield, they began to transmit a conversation among themselves.

“This River-Defying Sect certainly reacted quickly.”

“Well, that Bai Xiaochun is a deva after all. It only makes sense that he would detect our arrival.”

“It doesn’t matter. At worst, we’ll have to do a bit of work.”

When the two River-Defying Sect patriarchs realized that they were being ignored, their anxiety mounted, and their eyes grew more bloodshot.

The other disciples in the sect were completely shocked, and had begun trembling in despair. After all, even with Bai Xiaochun there to help, this was a collection of five devas they were facing!!

Patriarch Spirit Stream gritted his teeth and once again spoke.

“Patriarchs, would you--”

“Pipe down!” Li Xiandao interrupted. Snorting coldly, he waved his hand, summoning a 300-meter-wide illusory hand that shot down toward the spell formation shield.

Massive rumbling sounds filled the air as the hand landed onto the shield, which erupted with brilliant light. The shield bent inward, and cracks spread out across its surface, but in the end it held, whereas the hand shattered.

However, one of the shield layers had been broken. When that happened, the mountain ranges in the River-Defying Sect trembled, and countless bits of rubble crashed down their sides. The newly-repaired mountains were already on the verge of collapsing again.

Eyes bloodshot with madness, Patriarch Spirit Stream looked at Chen Hetian and the other devas and shouted, “Patriarchs, what crime did the River-Defying Sect commit that has you so set on exterminating us!?!?”

The other disciples in the sect couldn’t hold back any longer either, and began to shout out in anger.

“What crime did the River-Defying Sect commit!!”

“Why must you try over and over again to exterminate our sect!?!?”

Their cries became a sound wave that rolled out in all directions across the landscape. Finally, Chen Hetian snorted coldly. Ignoring the River-Defying Sect, he turned to Patriarch Dao River and Patriarch Starry River.

“You have the time it takes half an incense stick to burn to break open that spell formation shield. If you don’t... then the two of you can forget about continuing on as devas.”

The two patriarchs shivered. Eyes bloodshot, they rotated their cultivation bases in preparation to take action. They knew that

what Chen Hetian had said was no empty threat. In the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, his words were like law, and they didn't dare to defy him.

Shouting at the tops of their lungs, Patriarch Dao River and Patriarch Starry River unleashed all the power they could muster onto the River-Defying Sect.

Chapter 885: Throw Them Outside!

“How dare you people!!” Patriarch Spirit Stream shouted, simultaneously pouring more power into the spell formation. Patriarch Blood Stream also gasped under the power of the attack, but at the same time, his murderous aura erupted violently.

“Complete and utter bullying!! What crime has our River-Defying Sect committed?!?!”

The one to provide the response was Patriarch Starry River. “When the time came for you to be exterminated, you dared to fight back! That is your crime!”

The patriarch was feeling very excited. He couldn’t help but think about the bedraggled state he had been in when he fled from Bai Xiaochun, and how his revenge was now nigh.

“Get the hell out here and show your face, Bai Xiaochun!!” he shouted.

Gritting his teeth with anger, Patriarch Dao River said, “You listen to me, Bai Xiaochun. I’m going to empty out your River-Defying Sect in the exact same way you emptied out the Dao River Court!”

At the same time, the two patriarchs slammed into the spell formation, causing the River-Defying Sect’s headquarters to tremble violently!

The sect’s grand spell formation seemed mighty, but it couldn’t defend against a sustained barrage by multiple devas. As it teetered on the verge of collapse, and the disciples of the River-Defying Sect felt despair gripping their hearts, a voice was suddenly transmitted into the ears of Patriarch Spirit Stream and Patriarch Blood Stream. It was Bai Xiaochun!

“Buy me some time!”

Instantly, Patriarch Spirit Stream waved his hand and sent his

voice into the ears of the disciples of the sect.

“All disciples, merge your spirits with the Dire Skybanyan!!”

Shouts filled the air as all River-Defying Sect disciples shot toward the skybanyan and sent cultivation base power pouring into it.

As the disciples fell into place, scintillating light erupted from the huge tree, repairing the cracks in the spell formation shield.

It wasn't just the lower-ranking disciples who joined in the effort. The Nascent Soul cultivators helped as well, including Patriarch Spirit Stream. The only ones who didn't participate were Patriarch Blood Stream and the Blood Stream Division disciples, who flew into the body of the Blood Ancestor.

Moments later, the Blood Ancestor's eyes snapped open, and he threw his head back and roared. With the Blood Ancestor awake, he and the glittering shield were the last lines of defense for the sect!

Bruiser was there as well, standing in front of the Blood Ancestor, glaring murderously at the five devas.

Chen Hetian and the other devas stared back with narrowed eyes at the River-Defying Sect. The sect's reaction was shocking to them, both in terms of the speed of reaction, and their tactics. Clearly, they were superior to any of the other Middle Reaches sects!

With the full support of all the disciples of the River-Defying Sect, the shield created by the Dire Skybanyan was something that caused even Chen Hetian and the other devas to frown.

And although Bruiser and the Blood Ancestor weren't any major threat, they could certainly cause the devas a frustrating delay.

However, all of these were simply minor distractions. As far as Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian were concerned, this curious turn of events wasn't much to worry about. Although it

seemed as if they were in a rush, they were actually still feeling very confident.

Furthermore, with Bai Xiaochun around, they knew they had to be careful of a trap related to the spell formation. However, since they had Patriarch Starry River and Patriarch Dao River to take care of that, they weren't very worried.

One thing they were paying close attention to was a possible escape effort by Bai Xiaochun. If a deva like Bai Xiaochun escaped, it wouldn't be a huge disaster, but could cause complications down the line. However, they didn't feel that such a thing was likely to happen.

At the moment, Bai Xiaochun was seated cross-legged in his secluded meditation chamber, seemingly on the verge of weeping blood. He couldn't have been more nervous about what was happening outside; he knew that the River-Defying Sect was in a moment of critical danger.

And yet, he had no other options at the moment. If he went out right now to fight against five devas, he would have no hope of winning. And if he were killed, then the River-Defying Sect would definitely be exterminated.

The only chance... was to successfully conjure a twenty-one-colored flame. The flame of a heavenly necromancer would help him achieve a cultivation base breakthrough, and would enable him to step into the Deva Realm. Only then could he resolve this deadly crisis!

Of course, there was another option.... He could flee. If he escaped, then his existence would be a threat that could likely safeguard the River-Defying Sect to some extent.

But that wasn't something he would do unless he had no other choice. It was simply too risky. Besides, if his estimation of the situation were incorrect, it could lead to the River-Defying Sect being wiped out.

“Time to conjure some flame!” he said. In recent days, he had attempted to conjure so many twenty-one-colored flames that he’d lost count.

The vast collection of souls he had in his bag of holding was already beginning to run low.

With the skills he had built up as an earthly necromancer, he was able to perform flame conjurings in a very short period of time. Furthermore, all of the failures in the recent days had given him extensive experience. Every time, he had made progress. Now, he was very familiar with the formula, and the process itself. His string of failures had enabled him to solve all of the problems, or at least come up with theories on how to.

“I should be able to succeed!!” Eyes bloodshot, he began working again. He knew that the sect would not be able to hold out for very long, and could hear the rumbling sounds outside.

Taking a breath to calm himself, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing a vast group of souls to spread out around him. The time had come to begin the conjuring!

As the souls merged together and the sea of fire appeared, he took control of it, preventing it from expanding out into a large area. However, it was in that moment that an intense boom reached him from outside. Although he wished to maintain complete focus, he had to send his divine sense outside to see what was happening.

Patriarch Dao River and Patriarch Starry River had joined forces to attack the sect's grand spell formation, causing immense rifts to open up in the shield. As a result, blood sprayed out of the mouths of the River-Defying Sect disciples.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that, he slipped further into madness. The sea of fire destabilized, and immediately lurched toward collapse. Without the slightest hesitation, he flew out into the open, which attracted the attention of Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian.

The instant they looked over, their faces fell as they realized that Bai Xiaochun held a ball of flame that filled their hearts with intense sensations of danger.

“Bruiser, get out of the way!” Bai Xiaochun shouted. Rotating his cultivation base at full speed, he drew upon the power of his fleshly body to hurl the sea of fire out in front of him. It instantly transformed into a massive fireball that passed through one of the cracks in the spell formation shield.

“Get back!” Chen Hetian shouted at Patriarch Starry River and Patriarch Dao River. At the same time, he and the other three most powerful devas rushed forward to try to suppress the fire.

Unfortunately for Patriarch Starry River and Patriarch Dao River, they reacted a bit too slowly. Thunderous rumbling sounds erupted out as the ball of fire exploded, unleashing heaven-shaking, earth-shattering power.

From a distance, it was possible to see the terrifyingly powerful sea of fire transforming everything outside of the River-Defying Sect into blackened ash!

Patriarch Starry River and Patriarch Dao River trembled violently. Blood sprayed out of the mouth of the former, and the nascent divinity of the latter trembled unstably. Both flew backward, but were sustained by the power of Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian. Were it not for that help, both of the two weaker patriarchs would have been grievously injured.

Considering this was Bai Xiaochun’s first time using a fireball in this way, and he had aimed very carefully, the attack had been quite successful. If the enemy had been more prepared, it might not have worked as well.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” Patriarch Starry River shouted. However, even as he looked over, Bai Xiaochun vanished. Back in his secluded meditation chamber, he anxiously began to work on conjuring another flame.

At the moment, he suddenly felt less pressure.

“What an idiot I've been. Who cares if I fail!? When I fail, I can just throw them outside right before they explode!” Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but marvel at his quick-wittedness. Any other person in his situation would have to be completely focused, and would only appear out in the open in the final glorious moment.

But he was more awesome than that. He didn't need to wait until he succeeded. With every failure, he would shock everyone on the outside....

Chapter 886: Heavenly Twenty-One-Colored Flame

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun decided that he truly was a rare genius.

“That’s right. If they’re really unlucky, then I’ll fail every single time! Fudge! I’ll blow them all to bits!” Excitement surging, he continued on with more conjuring attempts. Everyone else in the River-Defying Sect was enlivened by what they had just seen, and poured all of the power they could into the spell formation, causing the cracks to rapidly repair themselves.

Patriarch Dao River and Patriarch Starry River both hesitated, fearful of the sea of fire they had just encountered.

“Damn that Bai Xiaochun!” Chen Hetian gritted his teeth and thought back to the exploding pill furnaces back at the Great Wall. Frowning, he took a step forward, appearing in front of the spell formation shield. Eyes flashing with cold light, he shoved his hand out toward the shield.

Bai Zhentian and Li Xiandao joined him, both of them stepping forward to attack the spell formation as well.

Patriarch Dao River and Patriarch Starry River immediately felt less nervous, and joined in. It only took the briefest of moments for five devas to be simultaneously unleashing attacks onto the spell formation shield.

Patriarch Spirit Stream’s face fell, and the anxiety of the River-Defying Sect disciples grew. The Blood Ancestor and Bruiser both flew toward the shield and bolstered it with all the power they could.

Booms rang out. Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian were all in the mid Deva Realm, far beyond compare to the other two patriarchs. All three of them unleashed attacks that became

enormous hands which pressed down onto the shield.

The spell formation shuddered, and distorted ripples spread out across it. More cracks opened up, causing numerous River-Defying Sect disciples to cough up mouthfuls of blood. It was all the spell formation could do to stand up to the attack of five devas, and obviously, it would only be able to hold out for a few moments longer before collapsing.

In his private chamber, Bai Xiaochun was virtually going mad. He currently had five tongues of sixteen-colored flame and three tongues of seventeen-colored flame, which he unhesitatingly threw out beyond the shield.

By careful use of his divine sense, he destabilized all of them, instantly causing them to explode.

Massive booms filled the air as a huge sea of flames spread out. Although it couldn't compare to the previous one, it was still shocking. Of course, Chen Hetian and the other devas had been prepared, and were able to evade the attack.

“Hmph!” Chen Hetian snorted. “Just trying to buy time, huh? Well... let’s see how much of that fire you have!” He was just about to press another attack when the Blood Ancestor pushed his hands down onto the Dire Skybanyan. Bruiser did the same.

In fact, all of the spirit beasts in the sect rushed over, using all of their energy to assist in the defense of the sect!

Even as the sea of fire faded away, the spell formation shield once again knitted back together.

Chen Hetian and the other devas blurred back into motion, yet again attacking the spell formation. However, the spell formation had stabilized greatly, and Bai Xiaochun continued to toss out fireballs.

Chen Hetian’s rage was mounting, and it was the same with Bai Zhentian and Li Xiandao. That was especially true of Li Xiandao,

who was shocked to realize that he was actually seeing multi-colored flame.

For Bai Xiaochun to have accumulated so many types of multi-colored flame in his time in the wildlands was shocking to the extreme, and was proving to be a big headache.

“Dammit, even one of those tongues of multi-colored flame could be considered priceless. I can’t believe he’s being so extravagant!!”

“How did this Bai Xiaochun get so much multi-colored flame in the Wildlands!?!?”

Not only were the devas shocked, they were being kept away from the spell formation because of the constant explosions. As a result, the River-Defying Sect’s shield continued to grow stronger by the moment.

The fact that five devas were incapable of blasting through the spell formation shield of a single Middle Reaches sect caused their fury to burn.

In his private chamber, Bai Xiaochun was both worried and filled with anticipation. At the moment, he was splitting his concentration between his efforts to conjure twenty-one-colored flame, and his attempts to pay attention to the battle outside, and toss out multi-colored flame.

Although he had built up stockpiles of multi-colored flame, they didn’t run too deep. However, he had no other ways to buy time. He was doing everything possible to conjure his twenty-one-colored flame, and although he was somewhat distracted, he was already working on compressing the flame he was working with.

As it shrank down, the numerous colors in the flame flickered madly. Even as Bai Xiaochun held his breath and looked for the additional color, Chen Hetian and the other devas unleashed another round of attacks on the spell formation.

Blood sprayed out of the mouths of the River-Defying Sect

cultivators, and many began to list in weakness. The spell formation clearly wouldn't last for much longer. Shouting, Bai Xiaochun threw out three tongues of eighteen-colored flame, and a tongue of nineteen-colored flame!

Eighteen-colored flame was shocking enough to begin with, so when it exploded, the intense heat it generated forced Chen Hetian and the others to back up.

“Dammit,” Bai Zhentian shouted. “How can this guy have so much multi-colored flame?!?”

“Get this spell formation down!” Chen Hetian bellowed. “Even if he has more multi-colored flame, he won’t dare to use it inside of his own sect.”

“Break this formation!” Li Xiandao yelled.

Without any hesitation, all three of the devas blasted the spell formation shield, joined by Patriarch Starry River and Patriarch Dao River.

Braving the intense heat, they closed in and launched powerful divine abilities into the shield.

Booms rang out as, at long last, the shield couldn't hold any longer, and collapsed!

Blood sprayed out of the mouths of all the River-Defying Sect forces, from the low-level disciples all the way up to Patriarch Spirit Stream and Bruiser.

As despair filled the hearts of the River-Defying Sect cultivators, Patriarch Dao River and Patriarch Starry River excitedly advanced into the sect.

However, it was in that very moment that Bai Xiaochun found the new color in the sea of fire. He quickly sent his divine sense inside, and successfully completed... the twenty-first color!!

An air of ultimate supremacy erupted out from the sea of fire,

causing the heavens to dim and a wild wind to kick up. The will of the five devas, which had taken over from the will of the heavens, was suddenly driven back as if by a massive hand.

Multicolored light erupted out into the night, causing the faces of the devas to fall as they sensed a sudden, intense feeling of deadly crisis!

The origin of that crisis was one of the River-Defying Sect's secluded meditation facilities, which was none other than the location where Bai Xiaochun was conjuring the flame. Although the devas didn't want to fall back, the bright light shining out from the area filled them with such a sense of danger that they had no other choice.

Patriarch Starry River and Patriarch Dao River were deeply shaken, and immediately began to retreat. It was in that moment that the most profound and maddening energy possible erupted out.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

“What is that?!?”

“What is this Bai Xiaochun doing?!?”

“This feeling... heavens! It feels like heaven and earth are about to be destroyed!!”

Even as the devas were completely and utterly shaken, something like an enormous net appeared high in the sky. It was impossible to determine what existed on the other side of that net, but Bai Xiaochun could tell that this was the very same world seal that he had seen during the spectacular battle in the Wildlands!

In his private chamber, Bai Xiaochun panted, and the sweat which popped out on his head instantly transformed into white steam. He was now fully concentrating, completely focused on the sea of fire.

“Form together, twenty-one-colored flame!!”

RRRRUUUUUUUUMBLE!

As the sea of fire shrank down into his hand, the intense energy caused deafening rumbling sounds to fill the air. Strangely, though, there was no sign of any form of tribulation.

The process lasted for the space of a few breaths of time. When the surging energy reached its peak, Bai Xiaochun closed his hand around the sea of fire.

Heart pounding, he took several deep breaths, then slowly opened his fingers. Brilliant light erupted out, causing the sky to vibrate and the lands to quake. There in the middle of his hand... was a twenty-one-colored flame!!

Heavenly fire!

Chapter 887: Deva!

Heavenly multi-colored flame could only be conjured by a heavenly necromancer. Whether it was the flame itself, or the heavenly necromancer, both were things of legend.

Neither had appeared within the Wildlands for countless years, and in fact, not even the formula for twenty-one-colored flame could be found.

Besides, Bai Xiaochun only did it with the help of his apprentice and a huge collection of souls. There had also been a chance set of circumstances that led up to a situation where Bai Xiaochun made his attempt without even being completely confident in succeeding.

As soon as the twenty-one-colored flame appeared in the open, and the dramatic signs appeared in heaven and earth, Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian gasped in shock. They had lived for a long time, and valued their own lives. Therefore, the sensation of imminent danger gave them no other option than to back away.

Patriarch Starry River and Patriarch Dao River Court had similar reactions, their eyes bulging and their hearts pounding as they retreated.

The despairing River-Defying Sect disciples saw the bright light, and could feel the pressure radiating out from Bai Xiaochun's secluded meditation facilities, and instantly, their hearts surged with excitement.

“Patriarch Bai!”

“It's Patriarch Bai!!”

“We have hope! With the patriarch here, who will dare to offend our River-Defying Sect!!”

Bai Xiaochun was just as excited as all the other cultivators in the sect. As he sat there looking at the tongue of twenty-one-colored

flame he had just conjured, he had the strong feeling... that the world around him couldn't contain something this powerful.

He looked up at the world seal net high above, and suddenly remembered something his apprentice had said, that he suspected twenty-one-colored flame was a limit within the world!

“This world... can only contain twenty-one-colored flame. Twenty-two-colored flame is an impossibility!!” Although it seemed a bit much to take in, he finally understood.

Back in the trial by fire in the labyrinth, he had seen twenty-one-colored flame. However, that had been an illusion, whereas the fire in front of him now was very real. He could clearly feel the terrifying fluctuations coming off of it, and could tell that it was a limit within the world. It was as if the world were using all the power it could to suppress the flame.

In fact... the recently conjured twenty-one-colored flame was already beginning to show signs of fading, as though the world around him... were trying to extinguish it!

There was no time for thought or planning. Without any hesitation, he pulled out his turtle wok, his eyes flashing with both madness and determination. It was only a legend that twenty-one-colored flame could push someone into the Deva Realm, and it was something that no one had ever done.

Bai Xiaochun was the only one throughout all the years who had met the requirements. And now, in the River-Defying Sect's moment of peril, and in the face of the twenty-one-colored flame teetering on the verge of being extinguished, Bai Xiaochun had no time to ponder what to do.

“Time to go for broke!!” he shouted, a fierce expression twisting his face. Although taking this risk was not something he would normally do, at the moment, he had no choice!

The instant the turtle wok was out in the open, his nascent soul

flew out into it. At the same time, he waved his hand!

The twenty-one-colored flame flew into the wok, fusing into it, causing it to tremble violently. Blinding light erupted out, causing heaven and earth to shake, and forcing incomprehensible levels of spiritual power to converge.

It was as if the River-Defying Sect had become a massive vortex, sucking in all the spiritual power of heaven and earth!

The faces of Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian fell dramatically, and they flew backward as quickly as possible, ill premonitions filling their hearts.

“Dao River, Starry River,” shouted Li Xiandao, “get over there and bust open his meditation chamber!”

The hearts of Patriarch Dao River and Patriarch Starry River surged with madness, but they didn’t dare to defy the orders they had been given. Seeing that Chen Hetian and Bai Zhentian weren’t offering any other instructions, they gritted their teeth and charged at full speed toward Bai Xiaochun’s private chamber.

Bruiser howled anxiously, and Patriarch Blood Stream sent the Blood Ancestor forward with him to intercept. Although neither of them were at the deva level, they could at least buy some time.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as the two deva patriarchs knocked Bruiser and the Blood Ancestor out of the way, and then closed in on the meditation chamber, toward which the massive quantities of spiritual energy surged.

“Open up!” Patriarch Dao River roared, hands flashing in a double-handed incantation gesture that sent tens of thousands of beams of sword light out to form the shape of an enormous great sword.

As the sword slashed down toward the meditation chamber, shocking energy filled the area. Patriarch Starry River also went all-out to unleash a similarly devastating attack.

“Starry Meteorite Subjugation!!”

Ear-splitting rumbling sounds filled the air, along with enraged shouts from countless River-Defying Sect cultivators, as countless meteorites materialized around Patriarch Starry River and then began to rain down toward Bai Xiaochun’s secluded meditation facilities!

All of this takes a bit of time to describe, but actually happened in the shortest of moments. In the blink of an eye, the meteorites fell, and the sword slashed down, causing the River-Defying Sect to shake violently. The mountains that contained Bai Xiaochun’s meditation chamber shattered, sending rocks and rubble flying out in all directions before transforming into ash!

Even the meditation chamber itself was destroyed!

“Xiaochun!!” Song Junwan cried. Even as Bruiser howled, Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian all shot down into the River-Defying Sect.

However, a moment later, their faces flickered with wild emotion.

“The will of a deva!!”

“That only happens when someone rises to the deva level, and fuses with the heavens. Bai Xiaochun... actually wasn’t a deva before?!?!”

“How is this even possible?!?” Crying out in alarm, all three of them fell back rapidly. And yet, even as they did, a shocking will erupted out from the rubble of the recently destroyed meditation chamber.

It was so powerful that as it merged with the heavens, the sky trembled. All previous ripples, all peals of thunder, all of the clouds, were instantly suppressed.

The will of Chen Hetian and the other devas, which had previously locked the area down, were instantly driven away!

Only one will was left, a domineering will that demanded that the wills of all other devas retreat!!

An enormous face materialized in the sky, a face with eyes closed, a face that filled all of the heavens, a face which caused the hearts of everyone in the River-Defying Sect to tremble with unbridled excitement. It was... Bai Xiaochun!

Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao, Bai Zhentian, Patriarch Dao River, and Patriarch Starry River all looked grim and even sick as they retreated. As for the latter two, they felt a sensation of impending death that surpassed anything they had felt in their previous encounter with Bai Xiaochun!!

It was in that moment that the eyes of the enormous face in the sky opened. The eyes locked onto Patriarch Dao River's nascent divinity, simultaneously causing all color in the world to dim!

Wind screamed and lightning danced, all of which coalesced into a shocking voice.

“Be destroyed!”

The face of Bai Xiaochun twisted, transforming into a beam of light that shot toward Patriarch Dao River. It moved so quickly that Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian couldn't even react.

To the shock of Patriarch Dao River, before he could even plead for mercy, that beam of light stabbed through his nascent divinity....

Chapter 888: Think You Can Leave?

The beam of light that had been Bai Xiaochun's face moved with indescribable speed, more quickly than anything the disciples of the River-Defying Sect had ever seen!

Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian were all shocked to the core! Not even they had ever seen anything like it!!

The bright beam of light shot down and stabbed through Patriarch Dao River's nascent divinity before he could even react.... He shivered, and his eyes went wide with disbelief as he looked down at his own chest.

As he did, a huge boom rang out, and his nascent divinity form exploded into absolutely nothing!!

He had been killed in the blink of an eye!!

The entire battlefield went deathly silent. The River-Defying Sect, Chen Hetian and the devas, and everyone else was looking at the spot where Patriarch Dao River had been killed. Waves of shock filled everyone present.... It was at this point that everyone realized that, right behind where Patriarch Dao River had previously existed... a person was materializing!

He had long hair and fair skin, and wore a simple robe. He seemed noble and magnificent, and yet, his eyes were as sharp as the sharpest of swords. He was none other than... Bai Xiaochun!

"Impossible!!" Chen Hetian gasped.

Bai Zhentian and Li Xiandao felt as though their minds were being struck by lightning, and their faces fell dramatically in the face of the power on display by Bai Xiaochun!

"This..." Bai Zhentian gasped. "Even if Dao River was only in nascent divinity form, he should have been able to evade that blow. Such speed... how is it even possible!?!?"

“He wasn’t a deva before,” Li Xiandao murmured, “but he most certainly is now!!”

The fact that Bai Xiaochun had previously not been a deva meant... that it was as a half-deva that he had injured one deva patriarch, crippled another, and killed the last! It was simply terrifying!

The horrifying significance of it all left Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian completely aghast!

Patriarch Starry River was shaking violently; his shock surpassed that of Chen Hetian and the others. After all, this was his second time seeing Bai Xiaochun kill a deva!

In fact, this time, it went even more smoothly than last time. The mere thought of what he had just seen struck him deeply with fear, and caused him to flee as quickly as possible. The last scrap of courage he had possessed was now gone, and if he had his way, he would never again do anything to provoke Bai Xiaochun.

Even as everyone present reeled in shock, Bai Xiaochun reached out and made a grasping motion in the direction of where Patriarch Dao River had been killed.

As he did, it was to the utter amazement of all onlookers that a soul shadow appeared. It had a blank look in its eyes, and clearly resembled Patriarch Dao River.

As it appeared, it began to float up, as if it were about to merge into some unseen vortex. After all, when souls died in the lands of Heavenspan, they would be taken away into the cycle of reincarnation.

However, before the soul of Patriarch Dao River could float up into the heavens, Bai Xiaochun grabbed it!

Although no one else present was capable of seeing it, Bai Xiaochun could see that there really was a vortex up above. And in the moment that he reached out to grab the patriarch’s soul, the

vortex vanished, as though it had no intention of interfering with his attempt to grab the deva soul!

As soon as he had it in his hand... he closed his fingers down, causing a yellow crystal to appear!

Sealed within that crystal was none other than... an earth-type deva soul!

The cultivators of the River-Defying Sect were both shaken and excited. Patriarch Spirit Stream was bubbling over with joy, and Patriarch Blood Stream's eyes shone with unprecedented madness.

“Patriarch Bai!!”

“Patriarch Bai!!!” The cries of joy which rang out from the River-Defying Sect seemed loud enough to fill all of the eastern Middle Reaches.

Bruiser howled in delight at how incredibly powerful Bai Xiaochun had become.

Patriarch Spirit Stream and Patriarch Blood Stream, the patriarchs from the other two divisions, Li Qinghou, and Zheng Yuandong were all beside themselves with joy.

“The River-Defying Sect finally has a deva!!” All of the powerful experts in the sect were virtually jumping with delight. Although they had been shocked by Bai Xiaochun's previous level of power, back then, he hadn't been a deva. Although most people in the sect hadn't been aware of that fact, Patriarch Spirit Stream had.

He hadn't been a deva, but possessed the battle prowess of one. And yet, the leadership of the sect still hadn't been able to rest easy.... But now, powerful fluctuations filled heaven and earth as Bai Xiaochun's will surpassed the will of the heavens. Because of that, Patriarch Spirit Stream and the others knew... that Bai Xiaochun was now a deva!!

The River-Defying Sect cultivators were beside themselves. As for Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian, as well as Patriarch

Starry River, the fact that Bai Xiaochun had just harvested a deva soul filled them with such profound shock that their minds went blank.

“Impossible!!” Chen Hetian breathed. Bai Zhentian and Li Xiandao gasped in astonishment. All three of the devas were filled with fright and terror that defied description.

What Bai Xiaochun had just done struck them to the deepest level. After all, the only type of person who qualified to both kill a deva and then prevent that person’s soul from entering the cycle of reincarnation was a demigod!

Neither Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao nor Bai Zhentian could accomplish such a thing. And yet, Bai Xiaochun had done it right in front of them!

It was almost impossible to describe the levels of shock and fear they felt as a result!

Astonishingly, Bai Xiaochun seemed to possess energy that could force heaven and earth to capitulate to his desires!

The truth was that, to most other devas, it would be completely impossible for them to prevent a deva soul from entering the reincarnation cycle of heaven and earth. But to Bai Xiaochun, it took almost no effort. After all... the cycle of reincarnation was part of the Underworld River, and his apprentice was the reigning Hell-Emperor. If he wanted a deva soul... how could the Underworld River possibly vie with him for it?

Although no one was able to tell, not even Chen Hetian and the other devas, from the way that Bai Xiaochun had attacked and killed Patriarch Dao River, it was clear that he was a rare... Heaven-Dao deva!

Furthermore, he had broken through using heavenly multicolored flame to perform a twenty-onefold spirit enhancement on his nascent soul!

Because of that, all early Deva Realm cultivators were beyond weak when compared to him. Even mid Deva Realm experts could be put in their place by him!

Perhaps he couldn't be considered the most powerful among all devas, but he was on that path. Throughout all the years which had passed, the only other person to become a Heaven-Dao deva was Daoist Heavenspan, who was also known as the Celestial!

Now, Bai Xiaochun was the second!

However, Bai Xiaochun had done something that the Celestial had not. He had performed a twenty-onefold spirit enhancement on his nascent soul using the peak level of flame that could exist in the world. That made Bai Xiaochun the ultimate type of deva!

He was the only person in all of history to do such a thing!

Some of it was coincidence, and some of it was because of Bai Xiaochun's hard work. All of it came together into something beyond belief! In fact, it had been somewhat of a gamble on his part. He hadn't been completely confident that a twenty-one-colored flame would make him a deva!

After sensing Bai Xiaochun's energy, Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian exchanged glances and then retreated en masse, leaving Patriarch Starry River conspicuously out in the open.

Terrified, Patriarch Starry River made to retreat, simultaneously rejoicing that Bai Xiaochun had chosen to strike down Patriarch Dao River and not himself.

However, even as the four devas began to back away, Bai Xiaochun turned his head, and his eyes flashed like lightning.

"You trespassed on the River-Defying Sect... do you really think you can leave without offering compensation?" The coldness and rage in his voice couldn't have been more apparent. The River-Defying Sect had just been in the deadliest of crises, and everyone knew that if he hadn't become a deva, the results would have been

unimaginable.

Chapter 889: Not As Fast As Me!

As soon as Bai Xiaochun's words echoed out, the eyes of Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian flickered. The three of them hadn't actually communicated about what to do; they had just fled as quickly as possible.

Their departure made Patriarch Starry River even more conspicuous, placing him right in between them and Bai Xiaochun.

To Bai Xiaochun, it seemed like they were putting Patriarch Starry River out as bait, to lure him out, see how strong he actually was, and then decide whether or not to join forces against him.

After all, they were all still members of the same sect. Because of their status and position within the sect, they wouldn't pick a fight that they weren't certain in being able to win!

Patriarch Starry River could also see what was happening, although that realization did him little good. All he could do was bite his tongue, spit out some blood, and draw upon a secret magic to try to flee....

All of this takes a bit of time to describe, but actually happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. Without the slightest hesitation, Bai Xiaochun sprang into motion. He had keen intuition when it came to battle, and therefore, he headed directly toward... the isolated Patriarch Starry River!

"Let's see who's faster, you people, or me!" Eyes flashing, he accelerated with blinding speed.

The instant Bai Xiaochun sped into motion, Patriarch Starry River let out a desolate shriek and tried to speed up. At the same time, Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian looked on with coldly flashing eyes.

"Turns out he really is too young and inexperienced," Chen Hetian said with a cold snort. "Far too impulsive!" He quickly

performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing red light to spring up around him, which rapidly became an enormous, blood-colored fist.

The 300-meter fist was surrounded by a madly spinning wind of blood-colored devastation. Countless vicious faces floated inside of it, shrieking madly as endless quantities of the spiritual power of heaven and earth poured into it. In the blink of an eye, the fist became almost completely corporeal, and was bearing down directly onto Bai Xiaochun.

The air shattered around it, and a reek of blood filled the area, tugging at the qi and blood of everyone in the River-Defying Sect.

“Blood Fiend Fist!!” Patriarch Blood Stream gasped. This was one of the trump cards at the disposal of Chen Hetian, something that, despite not being eternally indestructible, was very close to that level! In fact, once it was unleashed, it grew more powerful with every moment that passed!

The instant that Chen Hetian made his move, Bai Zhentian performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing a black horn to sprout out from his forehead. As it did, a black beam of electric light shot out, and grew larger with each moment.

The black light caused wild colors to flash in heaven and earth. Simultaneously, numerous lightning bolts formed overhead, becoming something like a huge net that shot down toward Bai Xiaochun!

As the net descended, it caused the air to vibrate with astonishing sealing power!

Numerous eyes were visible within the net, all of them as black as night! Furthermore, the net absorbed all of the surrounding lightning, causing it to split into 10 duplicate layers, then 100, then 1,000.... Eventually, it had over 10,000 layers!!

This was a trump card belonging to Bai Zhentian, and was

something he could only unleash with difficulty. However, considering how shocked he had been by Bai Xiaochun earlier, he knew he had to attack with his most deadly move!

Things weren't over yet. Last was Li Xiandao. Eyes shining with strange light, he opened his mouth and spat out a beam of white light, which grew larger and larger until it materialized into... an enormous chess board!

The illusory chess board seemed to fill all creation! It was as if the heavens were the chess players, the earth was the chessboard, and the magical power of Li Xiandao were the chess pieces!

Towering figures appeared within the cosmic chess board, celestial soldiers and generals clad in shocking armor.

There were five celestial soldiers on the front line, two muscular warriors behind them, and in the rear, numerous courtly officials, warhorses, and bloodthirsty foot soldiers, all protecting the person in the very center, the heavenmaster!

In the blink of an eye, the three devas unleashed supreme, destructive power that threatened to overwhelm both Bai Xiaochun and Patriarch Starry River!

Patriarch Starry River's eyes were bloodshot, and he was breathing heavily. He knew that he couldn't retreat now; if he did, he might escape death, but would surely incur the wrath of Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian.

He had no options to choose from. Spinning in place, he decided to stall Bai Xiaochun in the hopes that the divine abilities of the three other devas would kill him in time.

Everything was happening very quickly. Bai Xiaochun sprang into motion, and the divine abilities closed in on him. However, he didn't back down; instead, he accelerated.

As he moved, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing countless rocks and rubble in the area to fly toward him,

clumping around him until he was a towering stone golem!

This was the Living Mountain Incantation backed by a deva cultivation base!

As soon as his stone golem took shape, the net of lightning approached. And yet, despite how much destructive power was in the net, Bai Xiaochun was moving too quickly. His stone golem form was damaged, but he evaded most of the attack and closed in on Patriarch Starry River.

Without the slightest hesitation, he utilized the Mountain Shaking Bash!

The Mountain Shaking Bash increased Bai Xiaochun's speed dramatically. He evaded the cosmic chess board, dashing through the five celestial soldiers, and appearing right in front of Patriarch Starry River. Even as the patriarch let out a bellow of shock, Bai Xiaochun bashed into him.

A whump sound echoed out, accompanied by boundless ripples. Blood sprayed out of Patriarch Starry River's mouth as he was shoved backward. At the same time, Chen Hetian's trump card arrived, the enormous blood-colored fist.

As Patriarch Starry River fell back, Bai Xiaochun lunged forward, his enormous stone hand reaching out, black light shining off of the thumb and forefinger. It was none other than... the Throat Crushing Grasp!

A deafening boom rang out as Bai Xiaochun's Throat Crushing Grasp latched onto Patriarch Starry River. A strangled scream could be heard as the patriarch's fleshly body was torn to pieces, and his nascent divinity flew out into the open, expression that of terror and despair. Ignoring any thoughts of cooperating with Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian, he fled.

That was when Chen Hetian's enormous, blood-colored fist arrived, preventing Bai Xiaochun from chasing after Patriarch

Starry River.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes flashed. Even the slightest pause in his part would allow the three devas' divine abilities and magical techniques to land on him. And yet, he didn't hesitate at all to perform an incantation gesture, sending frigid qi erupting out in all directions.

Nine frigid projections appeared, which flanked Bai Xiaochun in a phalanx position as he shot forward toward the blood-colored fist.

When the nine frigid projections met the fist, they shattered with a boom. However, the blood-colored fist also lurched to a halt.

That brief pause was all Bai Xiaochun needed. He immediately stepped forward, utilizing the Undying Hex! The stone golem form crumbled as he passed through the enormous net, across the battlefield... to appear right in front of the Patriarch Starry River's fleeing nascent divinity.

In exactly the same way that he had cut down Patriarch Dao River, he became a beam of light that slashed all the way through Patriarch Starry River's nascent divinity!

A miserable scream rang out as... Patriarch Starry River's nascent divinity collapsed into pieces!

The chessboard described here is a Chinese chess board, which is different from the standard international chess board many of you are probably familiar with. The description of five men in the front, two behind them, and then a larger group further behind perfectly matches the opening layout of a Chinese chess board. Chinese chess is extremely popular in China. If you want to learn more about it, [check here](#).

Chapter 890: Valiant!

This was the third deva cultivator Bai Xiaochun had killed in his life!!

Each kill happened more smoothly than the last, and struck more fear into the hearts of those who looked on. Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian had tossed out bait, but Bai Xiaochun had acted with incomparable decisiveness, disregarding the divine abilities they had sent against him to strike down Patriarch Starry River!

The three remaining devas were shocked to the core. However, all of them were veterans of many battles, and therefore, it was without the slightest hesitation that they poured even more power into their divine abilities and magical techniques. The innumerable vicious faces that made up Chen Hetian's blood-colored fist shrieked ferociously as the fist grew larger and larger.

The lightning net of ten thousand layers sliced through the air as it shot toward Bai Xiaochun, locking down all avenues of escape!

And the cosmic chessboard grew more corporeal than ever. The celestial soldiers and generals attacked with mountain-toppling, sea-draining force.

Bai Xiaochun was being assaulted with deadly force on all fronts and from all directions!

The three devas had to admit that they had been careless earlier. Never could they have imagined that, before, Bai Xiaochun wasn't actually a deva, their carelessness would lead to both Patriarch Starry River and Patriarch Dao River perishing. It was a heavy blow to their self-confidence.

Having reached this point in the battle, they felt they had no choice other than to push things to the extreme. If they killed Bai Xiaochun in the process, then at worst, they would lose some

prestige in the process of explaining away the situation.

If they didn't come out on top, then not only would they have lost their deva subordinates, but they would also lose massive amounts of face, not to mention that they would have to deal with the future ramifications of having Bai Xiaochun alive and well in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

After all... if they came out on the bottom, Patriarch Steel Veins would surely use that fact to his advantage.

“Dammit!!”

“If we'd known this guy would be so hard to deal with... we wouldn't have come!”

However, if you ride a tiger, it's hard to get off. Therefore, Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian had no choice but to grit their teeth and intensify the power of their attacks. Since they had already committed some offenses... then they absolutely had to kill this opponent of theirs! That was the only way to resolve the situation!

Deafening booms filled heaven and earth as Bai Xiaochun turned in place. There was no time for him to harvest Patriarch Starry River's soul in the face of this deadly attack!

Although he was a Heaven-Dao deva, his opponents were three cultivators in the mid Deva Realm. There was no room for carelessness. A stern and awe-inspiring gleam could be seen in Bai Xiaochun's eyes; as of this moment, he wasn't thinking about his actions at all. He was acting on pure instinct. He took a step forward, waving his hand to summon frigid qi, and within it, nine frigid projections.

When the nine projections collided with the divine abilities of Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian, they collapsed. And yet, cracks appeared on the blood-colored fist, the lightning net began to unravel, and the cosmic chessboard began to fall apart.

That wasn't enough to stop the attacks moving against him, and yet, it had slowed them down, giving Bai Xiaochun time for his next move. Blurring into motion, he performed another incantation gesture with both hands, causing deva power to erupt out.

“Violet Qi Cauldron Summoning!” he shouted. Instantly, violet light filled the sky as a gigantic violet cauldron appeared. In the blink of an eye, it transformed from illusory into corporeal!

The truth was that it wasn't actually a violet cauldron. It was more than a hundred cauldrons, overlapping to create a glowing violet shield.

The instant the shield formed, Chen Hetian's blood-colored fist arrived, along with the lightning net and the chessboard.

BOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Bai Xiaochun shivered as his one hundred violet cauldrons collapsed one by one, causing intense fluctuations to roll out in waves. As he fell back, he resorted to the Living Mountain Incantation, as well as nine more frigid projections.

More cracks than ever covered the surface of Chen Hetian's blood-colored fist, and one of the fingers was already collapsing into pieces. The lightning net was in similarly bad shape, and had only about 7,000 layers left. As for the cosmic chessboard, the five celestial soldiers were almost completely destroyed, and the heavenly generals were close behind.

However, the three divine abilities looked just as impressive to anyone observing the fight from the outside, and seemed to be on the verge of wiping Bai Xiaochun out of existence!

Before he had become a deva, he wouldn't have been able to hold out, not even by drawing upon every last technique he was capable of. Even his Undying Emperor's Fist wouldn't have been enough to save him.

But now, things were different. Eyes flashing with strange light, he threw his hands first up, and then down.

“Waterswamp Kingdom!!”

A howl as if from another world erupted out, filling all creation. At the same time, water vapor roiled about, filling everything in sight!!

The area involved was vastly larger than anything which had been seen before when the Waterswamp Kingdom was unleashed. The sky went dim, and winds screamed as curved mountains rose up. The mountains soon became claws, which grew larger and larger... until an enormous hand was visible!

The scaled, pitch-black hand descended toward the divine abilities of Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian, smashing into them, and causing the devas’ faces to fall.

“What is this?!?!” they shouted in alarm. Before they could react, the huge clawed hand smashed into the divine abilities.

Three more fingers on the blood-colored fist were destroyed, leaving behind only a single finger. Even the palm was completely shattered!!

Massive ripping and tearing sounds could be heard from the 7,000 layers of the lightning net as almost all of them were destroyed. Only 2,000 remained! Nearly eighty percent of the troops atop the chessboard were transformed into ash, and the chessboard itself was badly damaged.

Although all of this takes a bit of time to describe, it happened with incredible abruptness. In the blink of an eye, the clawed hand was gone, and the three divine abilities were drastically reduced. Although none of them had been completely destroyed, they were significantly weakened, and as they bore down on Bai Xiaochun, he didn’t do anything to evade them. Instead, he reached out with his right hand.

A massive wind erupted out, slamming into the remaining finger from the blood-colored fist. When that happened, a tremor passed through Bai Xiaochun. Then the wind touched the lightning net, and he breathed in heavily, and took a step back. Lastly, he looked up as the wind smashed into the chessboard and its forces.

Massive booms could be heard as the fist collapsed, the net shattered, and the chessboard exploded. Blood oozed out of the corners of Bai Xiaochun's mouth as he staggered backward several steps. However, he wasn't significantly injured. He had mastered the Undying Bones, and as such, his eyes shone radiantly. His energy surged, causing all creation to tremble as an enormous, illusory version of his face appeared up above, and looked down menacingly at Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian.

“That’s all you’ve got? Alright. Now it’s my turn!”

Chapter 891: Quintuple Power Undying Fist!

“How is this even possible!?” Chen Hetian gasped, his mind spinning. The three divine abilities which had just been unleashed were powerful trump cards, any one of which should have been fully capable of inflicting grievous injuries on someone in the early Deva Realm.

Because of how seriously they viewed Bai Xiaochun, they hadn’t hesitated to join forces and unleash such high-level techniques. The fact that Bai Xiaochun had killed Patriarch Starry River was only secondary as far as they were concerned. What was more shocking was how afterward, he used one magical technique after another to fight back against them!

Bai Zhentian was flabbergasted, and at the same time, had a very bad feeling. Li Xiandao was reacting similarly, and realized that, although he had accepted from the beginning that this enemy was powerful, he had actually completely underestimated him.

“Dammit! This guy isn’t an Earth-Dao deva!!” That was what all three devas were thinking. However, there was no time for thought or planning; the enormous face of Bai Xiaochun which filled the heavens had already driven away their will, and was now causing immense pressure to weigh down on them!

They began to fall back, madness gripping their hearts. By this point, Bai Xiaochun had come to realize that his will had driven away the wills of the other devas, and was causing pressure to weigh down on them.

After his breakthrough, he had sensed himself fusing with heaven and earth. However, in the urgency of the moment, he had been able to do little more than fight back against his opponents.

But now, as his energy surged, and his face filled the sky, he finally felt... what it was like to be a deva!

Devas could completely fuse with heaven and earth, whereupon their every action would draw upon the power that existed in creation around them. A single breath could absorb spiritual power from vast distances. In fact, it would be very difficult for someone in the Deva Realm to actually run out of spiritual power under ordinary circumstances.

It was for that reason that some trump cards which required vast amounts of spiritual power could actually be used over and over again in quick succession by devas. For example, Bai Xiaochun's Waterswamp Kingdom. In the past, it had been difficult for him to use that technique twice in a row, but now, things were very different.

And yet, that was of secondary importance. More importantly, he could fuse with heaven and earth, effectively becoming the will of the heavens. His thoughts became the thoughts of the heavens! If he wished to punish his enemies, then the heavens wished to punish them as well!

That was the highest realm that devas could reach... Deva Shapes Heavenly Will!

Rumbling sounds echoed out as Bai Xiaochun's face grew larger, thunder rumbled, and the ground quaked in all directions.

The faces of the three devas' flickered as sensations of profound crisis filled their hearts. Yet again, they fell back. However, they were in the mid Deva Realm, and had been devas for many years. They had extensive experience in combat, and thus were able to suppress their fear, and use their moment of retreat to perform incantation gestures, unleashing divine abilities with incredible speed.

Blood qi erupted from Chen Hetian, transforming into an enormous blood-colored giant, who wielded a long, blood-red spear. Howling, the giant charged straight toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Zhentian was just as fast in his actions. Clouds roiled out

from his hands, becoming a nine-story pagoda that crushed downward toward Bai Xiaochun.

The strangest technique of all belonged to Li Xiandao. When he extended his right hand, a sword appeared in it, and at the same time, his eyes suddenly went blank, as if he were unconscious. However, he suddenly accelerated with blinding speed, becoming a beam of sword light that stabbed toward Bai Xiaochun.

The attacks of the three devas shook heaven and earth, and left everyone in the River-Defying Sect reeling in fear and anxiety. Many of them even began to pray in their hearts.

It was almost too much for many people to process mentally. However, only enough time had passed for a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun's eyes flashed, and his energy surged. He took a step forward, simultaneously clenching his hand into a fist!

All creation shook as a black hole appeared! That black hole seemed to suck in all of Bai Xiaochun's fleshly body power, and all of his life force. Although he didn't look any different physically, he felt like he was being torn apart inside. In the blink of an eye, everything about him was gone. At the same time, the enormous face up in the sky grew dim and difficult to see.

The only thing of him left behind... was the fist inside of that vortex!

As soon as the fist appeared, the faces of the three devas fell, and a sensation of imminent peril rose up in them that surpassed anything from before.

“What divine ability is that!?!?”

“What terrifying pressure!!”

Despite their terror, they hadn't reached the point where they felt helpless. In fact, their abundant experience in battle was telling them that they absolutely could not flee. If they did, they

would be crushed out of existence!

The only chance they had was to break this attack, and thus, their enemy's momentum. If they didn't, his will would grow stronger.

"Die!" Chen Hetian shouted. Unexpectedly, he merged into the blood-colored giant, hefted the spear in its hand, and stabbed it with more urgency toward Bai Xiaochun.

The nine-story cloud pagoda accelerated, and as for Li Xiandao, he appeared right in front of Bai Xiaochun, his sword stabbing directly toward his forehead!

However, even as the three counter attacks closed in, Bai Xiaochun looked up, and an enormous, shadowy being materialized behind him.

It was a man in imperial robes, with an imperial crown, face completely expressionless, and yet, resembling Bai Xiaochun in every way!

There was an incomparably domineering air to him. This was none other than the manifestation of... the Undying Emperor's Fist!

When that domineering, shadowy emperor appeared, Bai Xiaochun... unleashed his fist strike!!

Heaven shook and the earth trembled. Furthermore, since Bai Xiaochun was merged with all creation, becoming the will of the heavens, the pressure of a destructive heavenly punishment appeared!!

Now that he had mastered his Undying Bones, he was able to easily unleash this peak level of fleshly body power!

It was... a quintuple power Undying Emperor's Fist!!

It was a supreme level of destructive power, causing the air to ripple and distort. The gigantic, shadowy emperor fused into Bai

Xiaochun's fist, which, despite not growing any larger, shot toward the three devas, accompanied by intense rumbling sounds!

"We can't stand up to this!!" Chen Hetian blurted. That was what his instincts were telling him. And that was when Bai Xiaochun's Undying Emperor's Fist slammed into Li Xiandao.

The sky shuddered, and a tremor passed through Li Xiandao. Then, a massive stream of blood sprayed out of his mouth. His sword shattered, and he was sent tumbling backward like a kite with its string cut, as surely as if a huge mountain had slammed into him. In fact, he couldn't even stop the blood from erupting from inside of him.

Terror consumed him. His fleshly body was on the verge of falling apart, and his cultivation base was being dramatically destabilized as roughly thirty percent of the qi passageways inside of him were destroyed!!

"Impossible!!" he shrieked. And yet, even as he fell back, the Undying Emperor's Fist continued on without pause toward Chen Hetian, who was embodied as an enormous blood-colored giant.

First, the blood-red spear shattered, and then the giant's body exploded. Chen Hetian himself appeared, blood spraying out of his mouth as he was flung backward, a look of blank shock on his face.

Last was Bai Zhentian. As soon as his nine-story cloud pagoda was hit by the Undying Emperor's Fist, it shattered layer by layer. Bai Zhentian himself escaped narrowly, and yet, still ended up coughing up blood. Face ashen and filled with disbelief and alarm, he staggered backward, aura in shambles.

Chapter 892: The Shock Of The Hall of Steel Veins

The Undying Emperor's Fist was currently the most powerful divine ability at Bai Xiaochun's disposal. Especially the quintuple strength version. After all, even back when he wasn't a deva, he could still use it to fight with someone in the mid Deva Realm.

Now, he was in the early Deva Realm, and although he had not yet stabilized his cultivation base completely, he could still fuse with heaven and earth. Furthermore, he was a rare Heaven-Dao deva, which in itself made up for many of the weaknesses caused by not having a chance to stabilize his place within the realm. As such, he had just unleashed... what was essentially a perfect attack!

With it, he completely blasted away three devas. Of course, these were not ordinary devas, and they had been working together. Although they had been grievously wounded, they had not yet reached the point where they couldn't keep fighting. However, the shocking attack they had just sustained didn't just wound them physically; it was a severe blow to their courage!

The drastic phenomena caused by the fist strike caused everyone in the River-Defying Sect to be shaken to the core, regardless of their rank in the sect.

The shockwave from the attack was still spreading out, and yet, things weren't over yet. Even as blood sprayed out of the mouths of the three devas, and they fell back in terror, Bai Xiaochun's eyes flickered. Although he didn't look any different from before, the truth was that he had been significantly drained in terms of fleshly body power. He hadn't been completely emptied out, but was vastly weaker.

And yet, no one would be able to discern that from his facial expression. He had no special plan in mind, and yet, took another step forward.

As he did, his cultivation base surged, and his will strengthened. The enormous face in the sky above grew clear, and seemed to radiate the energy of the Undying Emperor's Fist, causing the lands below to quake violently. Then, Bai Xiaochun's foot landed, and he growled, "The River-Defying Sect is not the type of place that you can visit uninvited, and then leave without permission!"

The same words roared out from the mouth of the face up in the sky, making Bai Xiaochun seem dramatically impressive to everyone watching.

Except for Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian, whose eyes suddenly glittered.

"Something's off here!"

"What's the point of being so wordy in the middle of a fight...? Wait, don't tell me that he's actually out of power because of that fist strike?"

"Is he trying to get us to retreat?"

The three deva's spirits lifted. Without hesitation, they all spun in place, transforming into flashes of light that, instead of fleeing, shot directly backward toward Bai Xiaochun.

Their energy surged as they prepared powerful attacks. Although they were still being cautious, they were not holding back in terms of deadliness.

However, in almost the same moment as they began to speed back toward Bai Xiaochun, he smiled. And as soon as the devas saw that smile, their hearts lurched in their chests.

"Not good!"

"Dammit, he tricked us!!"

Suddenly, a mark appeared on Bai Xiaochun's forehead, which opened up into a third eye. The power of his Heavenspan Dharma Eye erupted out, sending violet light shooting toward the three

devas.

Before they could react, the light surrounded them, making them feel as if a huge, invisible hand had grabbed them. Simultaneously, Bai Xiaochun performed an incantation gesture with both hands and then waved them out in front of himself.

“Frigid domain!”

Rumbling sounds could be heard as indescribably cold air erupted out from Bai Xiaochun. Everything in the area began to freeze over, and at the same time, 27 frigid projections materialized.

Each of the 27 projections looked exactly like Bai Xiaochun, and as soon as they appeared, they pounced on the three devas!

From the murderous aura which surrounded the projections, it was easy to imagine what would happen if they reached them. Although they wouldn't be killed, they would definitely suffer grievous fleshly body injuries.

Now was not the time for the devas to ponder the situation. Thunderous rumbling sounds erupted from Chen Hetian as he drew upon a secret magic that caused three rifts to open up on his face. Bone was visible beneath those rifts, and after they were fully open, Chen Hetian was suddenly given access to immense power.

He struggled mightily against the power of the Heavenspan Dharma Eye, and then suddenly shot backward 3,000 meters, placing him a safe distance from any of the frigid projections.

Only he knew the true price he had just paid to evade that attack. The three rifts which had been sliced open onto his face reduced his longevity by at least a sixty-year-cycle, and also dropped his cultivation base by roughly half a realm.

It caused his heart to drip with figurative blood, and yet, he had had no other options. In fact, he wasn't the only one to make such a decisive, drastic decision. Bai Zhentian and Li Xiandao both used similar secret magics, and paid extremely heavy prices to retreat

from the frigid projections.

As a result of their quick retreats, the frigid projections pounced on nothing but thin air, and then faded away into nothing!

Although they had seemed impressive and dangerous earlier, the truth was that they weren't backed by very much power. That caused extremely unsightly expressions to appear on the faces of Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian.

However, as of this point, they already weren't willing to trust their senses. Originally, they had taken Bai Xiaochun to be strong in appearance only, which was why they had attacked. Although he had counter attacked with what was essentially a feint, they were now too unnerved and hesitant to try again.

The threat of Bai Xiaochun's Undying Emperor's Fist was simply too great, and they currently had no way of assessing his true strength.

Even as they hesitated, Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin up, waved his sleeve, and looked at them with cold, domineering eyes.

"Chen Hetian. Eccentric Bai. And you, third guy who I don't know. Do you want to fight, or not? If not, then screw the hell off!" As his voice echoed like thunder, the cultivators of the River-Defying Sect looked up with looks of profound excitement.

The three devas had very unsightly expressions on their faces, and had hearts filled with anxiousness. On the one hand, they feared escalating the fight, but on the other hand, didn't want to back down.

It was in that very moment of hesitation that the three devas suddenly looked up. There, off in the distance, the clouds churned as numerous beams of light appeared. Within moments, a massive formation of troops became visible.

One figure after another shot out into the open. Thousands. Tens of thousands. Soon, it was fully 100,000!! Battle cries filled the air,

making it clear that a shocking army was incoming.

It was none other than Bai Lin, Zhao Tianjiao, Patriarch Steel Veins... and the armies of the five legions!

“Who dares to harm one of my major generals!?!?”

“The Hall of Steel Veins campaigned for years at the Great Wall. Now that one of my major generals is back, who dares to cause him grief!?!?”

“You’ve pushed things too far, Patriarch!”

“Master...”

As the voices rang out, the newcomers suddenly caught sight of the battlefield, and their eyes went wide with disbelief.

Those who had cultivation bases at the level of Bai Lin or higher could sense the lingering fluctuations that would result from the death of a deva’s nascent divinity. And those who could not sense such things could see the shattered fleshly body of Patriarch Starry River, as well as his severed head!

Even more shocking was the current state of Bai Xiaochun and the other three devas.... Bai Xiaochun hovered there in the air looking completely domineering and arrogant, facing Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian, all of whom had blood dripping down their faces, and were clearly weakened and in very bad shape.

Furthermore, it was obvious that the three devas had been working together... and yet weren’t a match for Bai Xiaochun!

Everyone, Bai Lin included, was left gasping in shock. Most taken aback of all was Patriarch Steel Veins.

“He struck fear into the hearts of three devas?!” he thought. “He actually injured all of them!?”

His eyes flickered in a way that no one would be able to detect. As a powerful deva expert, he was able to clearly sense the evidence of the deaths of Patriarch Starry River and Patriarch Dao River.

Furthermore, he could easily see how badly wounded the three devas were, as well as the evidence of how the fight had ended!

“They... just used secret magics!?! This Bai Xiaochun actually forced Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian... to use dangerous escape magics!?!?!?”

Chapter 893: Demigod Dharmic Decree!

Silence reigned on the battlefield. The cultivators from the Hall of Steel Veins were all staring blankly at Bai Xiaochun, their hearts battered by waves of shock.

As for Bai Lin and Zhao Tianjiao, it looked like their eyes might pop out of their skulls at any moment.

Down below, the numerous cultivators of the River-Defying Sect were bubbling with excitement at how valiant Bai Xiaochun had been in defeating Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian.

The three defeated devas' expressions flickered. Not only were they in very bad shape after their fight, there were plenty of fellow sect cultivators who had witnessed the affair. It was a big loss of face, and a huge embarrassment. And yet, they were truly in fear of Bai Xiaochun's strength.

At the same time, the three devas were relieved that the Hall of Steel Veins forces had arrived. If you ride a tiger, it's hard to get off, but now they had the perfect opportunity and excuse to retreat.

Bai Xiaochun hovered there, feeling very pleased at the exclamations he had heard from Zhao Tianjiao, Bai Lin, and everyone else. Looking over, he could see that the three devas wished to withdraw. After blinking a few times, he kept his exhaustion hidden and unleashed some cultivation base power.

“Chen Hetian and you other two. You really pushed things too far. I, Bai Xiaochun, have performed great services for the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect! I've shed blood for it!!

“I slaughtered countless enemies at the Great Wall, and yet, you tried to exterminate my sect. Nobody could stand for such a thing!

“You owe me some compensation! If you don't kowtow immediately in apology, and swear an oath to stay out of the way

of all River-Defying Sect disciples in the future, then this matter will not be over. Even if you escape, I'll track you down and fight my way into your clans!" He emphasized his words with the flick of a sleeve. After all, he had justice on his side.

When Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian heard his words, they very nearly coughed up more mouthfuls of blood. Bai Xiaochun's words were biting to the extreme. Earlier, he had simply told them to either fight or screw off, but now that he had some friends to back him up, he was acting even more extravagantly. Not only was he demanding compensation, he was also forcing them to lose face publicly.

"Don't go overboard, Bai Xiaochun!" Li Xiandao growled, his eyes completely bloodshot. After all, he had just worked very hard to extricate himself from this situation, and now that easy exit was being removed.

That was when Patriarch Steel Veins took a deep breath and blurred into motion. In the blink of an eye, he was next to Bai Xiaochun, although he kept a good distance from him.

Eyes flashing with incisive light, he looked at the other three devas and spoke in a sinister voice as cold as winter wind.

"Overboard? Chen Hetian. Bai Zhentian. Li Xiandao. Do you really think you can go and bully people from the Hall of Steel Veins any time you like?!?!"

"My old pal Bai is exactly right. The Hall of Steel Veins slaughters enemies without count, and yet you sneak around trying to exterminate sects!? Who could possibly stand for such a thing!? Although Brother Bai hasn't yet been made an elder by the demigod patriarch, considering that he was a major general, and is a member of the Hall of Steel Veins, then that puts him under my protection!"

"So, let's see who here today dares to do a thing to anyone from the Hall of Steel Veins!" As the deva patriarch spoke, the

cultivators from the Hall of Steel Veins unleashed murderous auras that formed something of a spell formation, locking down any paths of escape for Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian.

Bai Xiaochun's spirits were lifted even more, and it was the same with the River-Defying Sect. In contrast, the three devas were grumbling bitterly, and their expressions were extremely unsightly.

All of a sudden, Bai Xiaochun realized that this was a great opportunity! If he made a move right now, then all of his allies would obviously support him.

However, just when he was about to break into motion, the sky suddenly filled with intense rumbling sounds that surpassed heavenly thunder. The sky went dim, and distorted. Spasms rolled out across the surface of the land. At the same time, a powerful blast of energy appeared, shoving Bai Xiaochun backward.

The same energy hit Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian, sending them flying backward by several hundred meters. As for the murderous aura being emitted by the Hall of Steel Veins, it winked out instantly.

And yet, things weren't over yet. Shocking pressure began to weigh down from above, pressure that caused the faces of the devas to fall. The Nascent Soul cultivators present began to tremble, and anyone under that level felt like they were being strangled!

Furthermore, the wills of the all the devas were completely driven away down to the tiniest scrap as an enormous figure of light appeared up above!

It appeared to be made of starlight, and was threatening without being angry. Large enough to prop up heaven and earth, it caused everyone who could see it to be shaken deeply.

It appeared to be a middle-aged man, who was looking down on

everyone present, heavenly bodies gleaming in his eyes. The fluctuations rolling off of him vastly surpassed those of a deva. They were demigod fluctuations, and were not being restrained in even the least bit.

When all of the other four devas saw the figure of light, they clasped hands and bowed deeply.

“Greetings, Patriarch Starry Sky!”

They weren’t the only ones to react in such a way. The Nascent Soul cultivators from the Hall of Steel Veins trembled as they offered formal greetings. Then, everyone else who didn’t recognize the glowing figure, but heard the words of the other powerful experts, gasped and followed suit.

Bai Xiaochun’s breath caught in his throat, and he shivered inwardly. Obviously, this glowing figure of light was none other than... the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect’s most powerful expert, the demigod patriarch!

“The demigod is stepping in!” Although Bai Xiaochun was a bit nervous, he reminded himself that he had seen his fair share of demigods, and thus managed to suppress his anxiety. However, he put an expression of deep fear onto his face as he clasped hands in formal greeting.

It only took moments for everyone on the battlefield to be bowing in reverence to Patriarch Starry Sky, as if he were the most eminent figure in all heaven and earth.

No expression could be seen on his face as he looked over the crowd, ignoring Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian. In fact, he even ignored the deva from the Hall of Steel Veins. Instead, he fixed his gaze on Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun had just suppressed his anxiety, only to have it flare up again. He immediately thought back to some ways that he had dealt with demigods back in the Wildlands, and yet quickly

realized that this was a totally different situation. Even as his anxiety mounted, and he scrambled to come up with new ideas, the figure of light looked away from him.

Then, an ancient, profound voice rumbled out to fill the entire area.

“Let Bai Xiaochun be appointed as an elder in the Hall of Steel Veins. He shall be given an elder’s command medallion, an immortal’s cave on the blue rainbow, and will select a date to make an official return to the sect! Henceforth, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect has six devas!”

As his words echoed out with thunderous intensity, the cultivators from the Hall of Steel Veins became visibly excited. As for Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian, their faces grew deathly pale, and they bowed their heads.

They knew that, with the approval of the demigod patriarch, there would be nothing they could do from preventing Bai Xiaochun and the River-Defying Sect from rising to prominence in the eastern Heavenspan River.

If the Hall of Steel Veins was excited, there was almost no need to mention the River-Defying Sect. They were so swept up in the moment that they began to cheer out loud. As for Bai Xiaochun, he breathed a sigh of relief, and wondered why he had been so scared before....

“Who cares about demigods! I absorbed one of the Celestial’s hairs! And I’m supposed to be scared of a demigod? My apprentice is the Hell-Emperor, and my father-in-law is a demigod!” And thus he continued to encourage himself, and muse excitedly about how perfectly he had fought back earlier.

Chapter 894: Deva Pill!

The demigod patriarch gazed at Bai Xiaochun with a profound and enigmatic look before slowly fading away into nothing.

He took Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian along with him when he went, which was a good thing for them. If he hadn't, Bai Xiaochun wouldn't have let them leave unscathed. He had already been glaring at them menacingly before acquiring the open approval of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

To see them fading away with the demigod patriarch was a bit irritating.

“So stingy! It's not like I would actually kill them or something.” However, he was so flushed with success that he didn't dwell on such negativity. After all, Zhao Tianjiao, Bai Lin, and the cultivators from the Hall of Steel Veins were all still present, and he needed to thank them.

Patriarch Steel Veins wore a broad smile when he spoke, treating Bai Xiaochun, not with superiority, but as an equal.

Bai Lin seemed to have endless sighs in his heart, and the truth was, he couldn't stop thinking about everything that had happened back at the Great Wall. Zhao Tianjiao reacted similarly. Both men seemed to have been deeply affected by what Bai Xiaochun had accomplished, and both of them were determined to return to the sect and go directly into secluded meditation to work on their cultivation!

Among the tens of thousands of other cultivators who had come, many were war buddies from the Great Wall. Some had also been Bai Xiaochun's direct subordinates. All of them were very excited to see him, and didn't hesitate to accept his invitation to stay in the River-Defying Sect to celebrate.

The patriarchs of the River-Defying Sect were thrilled about

what was happening, and threw a feast to thank everyone who had come to offer their aid.

That night was like a dream for most of the disciples of the River-Defying Sect. Their nervousness from earlier became joy, and of course, their esteem for Bai Xiaochun grew even greater.

At the same time, their anticipation for what was to come for the sect grew more intense!

The patriarchs reacted similarly. It was as if an enormous weight had been lifted off their shoulders, and their faces were covered with smiles for the entire night.

The following morning, the cultivators from the Hall of Steel Veins left.

After seeing them off, Bai Xiaochun sighed, relieved that he had at long last settled all of the issues that the River-Defying Sect faced.

He could well imagine how, in the coming days, the River-Defying Sect... would be the number one sect in the eastern Middle Reaches cultivation world of the Heavenspan River. From now on, the other three sects... would be subsidiaries of the River-Defying Sect!

“But... it's still not enough!” he thought. He glanced down at his bag of holding, and his eyes began to shine with determination. If the River-Defying Sect truly wanted stability, they couldn't just have a single deva. If one of the current patriarchs could become the sect's second deva, even if it was only the Mortal-Dao Deva Realm, then the River-Defying Sect could be considered truly stable in its position.

After all, the demigod patriarch's Dharmic decree had made clear that Bai Xiaochun would need to return to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect soon. That meant that his time in the River-Defying Sect was limited.

“I can’t wait too long before leaving, that wouldn't be good.... Therefore, I need to make sure that one of the patriarchs becomes a deva before I leave!” One of the reasons he was so confident in being able to make that happen was the [rainbow spirit thistle](#) he had acquired during a shakedown in the Wildlands.

Considering his skill in the Dao of medicine, he was sure that, with the cooperation of the Pill Stream Division, he could use that rainbow spirit thistle to concoct... a Deva Pill!

Deva Pills were very rare, and extremely difficult to concoct. Although he was confident that he could produce one, he didn’t have enough ingredients to make multiple copies.

As for which patriarch he wanted to become a deva, he decided not to worry about it. Although he would surely be able to give input, it was a sensitive subject, and therefore, the best thing would be to let the patriarchs decide among themselves.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, he sent a message to Patriarch Spirit Stream and Patriarch Blood Stream, informing them of his plan. Then he went into his secluded meditation facilities to start working.

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The entire River-Defying Sect was abuzz with talk of Bai Xiaochun. As for Song Junwan, her position in the sect had already changed. In the past, people knew that she was close with Bai Xiaochun, and because of that, she had been treated differently. However, it hadn’t been very obvious.

But now, things were very different. Elders and patriarchs alike treated her with the utmost respect.

In fact, everyone who had good relationships with Bai Xiaochun were being treated differently. Especially... Li Qinghou!

Since Bai Xiaochun was effectively the ultimate leader of the sect now, and Li Qinghou was his uncle, that put him in a very high

position. In fact, after some discussion, the patriarchs agreed that when the time came... Li Qinghou would be the next sect leader!

Shortly after that, the patriarchs got word from Bai Xiaochun that he planned to concoct a Deva Pill, which would make it highly likely that one of the half-deva patriarchs would finally be able to break out from the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage. Of course, the patriarchs were both delighted and deeply thankful.

Their first thought was to give the honor to Li Qinghou. Unfortunately, his cultivation base was not in the great circle, and they were worried that it would take him too long to get there. They urgently needed a deva patriarch in place in the sect, and therefore, after discussion with Li Qinghou himself, they decided that Patriarch Spirit Stream would be the one to take the pill.

After all, Patriarch Spirit Stream had lived for many, many years, even longer than Patriarch Blood Stream, whose cultivation base was at the same level as his.... Reaching the Deva Realm would give him significant longevity, and Patriarch Spirit Stream had his secret magic that further increased longevity. Even Patriarch Blood Stream had to admit that if he himself became a deva, he would eventually perish, whereas Patriarch Spirit Stream could potentially live for much longer.

Naturally, having Patriarch Spirit Stream as the deva in the sect would be the most beneficial.

Furthermore, with one deva permanently in the sect, it would make it easier for others to reach that level.

As the patriarchs discussed all of these matters, Bai Xiaochun was in his secluded meditation facilities doing the initial work in preparation to concoct the Deva Pill. The sect had acquired the formula long ago, but had never possessed the primary ingredient, and had thus been unable to concoct it.

Bai Xiaochun's work caused the entire sect to fill with a lovely, sweet fragrance.

Bruiser particularly liked the smell, and plopped himself down in front of Bai Xiaochun's secluded meditation chamber to breathe it in. All spirit beasts benefited from it, and even cultivators would experience a certain refinement of their cultivation bases by breathing it in.

This unexpected phenomenon caused everyone in the River-Defying Sect to be in even further awe of Bai Xiaochun. However, the aroma didn't last for long, as Bai Xiaochun emerged from seclusion seven days later.

He immediately sent word to the patriarchs, whereupon the Pill Stream Division sent over a few dozen grandmaster apothecaries, as well as Li Qinghou, to help Bai Xiaochun in his work. They immediately set up a medicinal spell formation which allowed Bai Xiaochun to begin the final stages of his work.

His concocting session lasted for an entire month. Unfortunately, he met with failure in each attempt, losing some of his primary ingredient every time.

He was starting to get anxious, but managed to suppress his nervousness, and took the opportunity to learn from every mistake. As the saying goes, everything comes to him who waits.... It was on his seventh attempt... that he succeeded, just when he ran out of ingredients!

On that day, illusory thunder crackled, and a spirit fragrance filled the entire sect, causing a mist to spring up. The entire River-Defying Sect looked like a celestial paradise as a result.

"I finally did it!" Bai Xiaochun was a bit gaunt, but his eyes sparkled with excitement. As his laughter rang out, the patriarchs hurried over to find him holding a white, glowing medicinal pill.

A single glance at that pill caused deep desire to rise up in the hearts of the patriarchs. All of them could sense how the pill almost seemed fused with the world around it.

After a long moment, the patriarchs managed to suppress their feelings. A very serious expression could be seen on the face of Patriarch Spirit Stream as he accepted the pill. He nodded at Bai Xiaochun, clasped hands and bowed deeply to the other patriarchs, and went into secluded meditation.

The pressure he faced was immense. After all, he only had one Deva Pill, and therefore, only had one chance to succeed!

He got the rainbow spirit thistle in chapter 765

Chapter 895: Breaking The Shackle

Bai Xiaochun had finally resolved all of the crises facing the River-Defying Sect. He himself was now a deva patriarch of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and had put the River-Defying Sect in the position of being the absolute overlord of the Middle Reaches cultivation world.

On top of that, he had successfully concocted a Deva Pill for the extremely long-lived Patriarch Spirit Stream, giving him a very good chance of reaching the Deva Realm. Bai Xiaochun was very satisfied with everything.

At the moment, he stood outside of his immortal's cave, petting Bruiser's head and looking around at the sect. The disciples were still busy with the renovation work, and were in very high spirits.

Feeling more than wonderful, he flicked his sleeve, stuck his chin up and murmured, "I'm happy. Everybody's happy. I'm strong. The sect is strong.... Ah, Bruiser, you know I'm the kind of person who likes the limelight. Who could ever have imagined that fate would lead me here... [a patriarch at such a young age](#).... I'm not old at all!" He shook his head and sighed, feeling more proud of himself than ever.

"I never wanted to go back to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, but as you saw, the demigod patriarch personally asked me to go. What a headache!

"I'm also an elder in the Hall of Steel Veins, which is a really rare thing. I guess I have no choice in the matter. All my old friends and war buddies are there. I really just have to accept my status.

"What do you think, Bruiser...? Why am I just such a genius? Ai...." A scowl of helplessness slowly spread out across his face.

Bruiser blinked a few times and looked around, only to find that they were alone, prompting him to snort quietly. After all, Bai

Xiaochun usually only acted depressed like this when he knew people were around to see him.

When Bai Xiaochun saw the reaction he was getting, he cleared his throat and then bopped Bruiser on the head.

“Play along!” he said with a glare. “You know what that means? From now on, whenever you hear me talking like this, you need to play along. That’ll make me like you even more, alright?”

At first Bruiser whimpered, but then he quickly changed his expression to match Bai Xiaochun’s. When Bai Xiaochun saw how depressed he looked, he frowned and added a few more words.

“No, that’s not the right expression. Listen, when you hear me say things like I just said, you need to look excited! Sigh deeply and with meaning! Make it seem like you’re resigning yourself to a truly bitter fate!” After receiving a few more pointers, Bruiser finally got the right expression onto his face. With that, Bai Xiaochun started over with his act, and Bruiser played along.

“Hahaha! Great job, Bruiser. Alright, come along with dad as I take a walk. Remember, when you hear me say those things, put that expression on your face immediately!” In very high spirits, Bai Xiaochun led Bruiser on a stroll through the sect. Wherever they went, the people they encountered would offer respectful formal greetings.

Whenever there was a big enough of a crowd, Bai Xiaochun would sigh and monologue a bit. The disciples who didn’t know much about him would be shocked. The ones who knew him, though, would simply sigh; this was not their first time seeing him act in a way like this.

Bruiser played along perfectly, and worked very hard at it. As Bai Xiaochun sighed, he would wail and wrap himself around Bai Xiaochun’s leg, eyes shining with a look of comfort. It was as if he were saying to Bai Xiaochun...

It's simply your fate to be such a genius....

Those who saw this happening were shocked, and many a strange expression could be seen. As for Bai Xiaochun, his delight mounted, and he dragged Bruiser from one place to another for an entire day. The more people who called out greetings to him as a patriarch, the more strange expressions could be seen.

“Uh... how come the patriarch is acting so strange...?”

“Maybe all devas are like this?”

“Oh, you guys have no idea.... Bai Xiaochun, er... Patriarch Bai was always like this. Um... you just need to get used to it, that's all.”

Talk like that followed Bai Xiaochun wherever he went in the sect.... The next day, his enthusiasm had not yet waned, and the same scene played out again....

He went to see Beihan Lie three times, nearly driving him mad. Beihan Lie would always greet him with the utmost respect, and then be forced to listen to Bai Xiaochun's endless sighs. On the second day, Beihan Lie chose to go into secluded meditation.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit saddened by that, but then he went to find Shangguan Tianyou.... In fact, he went to see all of the people he knew in the Spirit Stream Division. After that, he went to the Blood Stream Division....

It was in that fashion that three whole days passed, until everyone in the River-Defying Sect came to fully understand Bai Xiaochun's personality. Wry smiles could be seen everywhere, and many people began to avoid him as soon as they saw him off in the distance. After all, he didn't seem anything like a deva patriarch in person.

Bai Xiaochun did not get discouraged. Actually, he became more focused. In fact, he had just decided to go look into the specifics of why Beihan Lie was in secluded meditation when Song Junwan

finally had enough. Rushing over angrily, she rebuked him up and down until he finally rubbed his nose and gave up on acting like a patriarch.

“All I was doing was sighing and saying a few things.... Ah, whatever. I guess if I’m not even allowed to sigh, I’ll just go into secluded meditation.” After all, he would be in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect soon, and nobody there would care if he went around sighing.

Filled with aspirations for what was to come, he went into meditation.

For one thing, he needed to wait until Patriarch Spirit Stream achieved his breakthrough. And also, he had still not yet stabilized his cultivation base after his recent breakthrough. And then there was the Undying Codex. Having mastered the Undying Bones, and having achieved a breakthrough, he was now in the position... to break through the fourth shackle of the human body!

Once that happened, he knew that his fleshly body power would increase. Most importantly... he would be able to cultivate the final part of the Undying Codex....

The Undying Blood!!

“The Undying Blood is the true essence of the Undying Codex. If I succeed with that... I won’t necessarily be truly undying, but... I definitely won’t be dying anytime soon!” With that thought on his mind, he got to work.

After sitting down cross-legged, he cast his senses inward to the shocking spiritual power of heaven and earth that flowed through him constantly. It almost made him feel as if he were a part of the world around him!

Every move he made could be filled with heavenly might, and every breath he took could rumble like thunder!

“So this is what it’s like to be a deva.... It’s totally different from

the Nascent Soul stage. A complete transformation!” The more he probed his cultivation base, the more excited he got. Furthermore, he could tell that after becoming a deva, his longevity had grown vastly more vigorous.

“I wonder if... I could live for 5,000 years now?” The thought excited him, and he began to do some calculations, but was soon disappointed to realize that he probably couldn’t reach 5,000....

“Ai. I’m still very far away from my goal of being able to live forever.” After examining his cultivation base for a bit longer, he sank into a trance and began to work on his fleshly body power.

Cracking sounds could be heard inside of him, which came from his bones. The power of his qi and blood erupted out, causing the air in his secluded meditation chamber to twist and distort as a vortex sprang up around him.

Based on the fluctuations, Bai Xiaochun was sure that he could sense... the fourth shackle!

It felt much the same as the previous three shackles. Although the sensation wasn’t particularly clear, he was sure that something like an enormous mountain was weighing down on him with profound heaviness.

All of a sudden, he felt the impulse to smash into that mountain!!

Eyes widening, he shouted, “It’s time to break the fourth shackle!”

I’m not quite sure if it’s supposed to be a play on words or not, but the word for patriarch in Chinese has the character “old” in it...

Chapter 896: Undying Blood!

No one but Bai Xiaochun could hear the thunderous rumbling sound that filled him. It surpassed heavenly thunder as it echoed through his body, causing him to shake where he sat, blue veins bulging out on his neck and face.

It really did feel to him like there was a huge mountain pressing down on him. Drawing upon his incredible fleshly body power, he pushed back against that mountain in an attempt to break it.

The power of qi and blood surged inside of him, and as the rumbling sounds grew more intense, he shouted, “Break!!”

At that point, the invisible mountain that was the fourth shackle of the human body shattered. All of a sudden, he felt lighter and freer, like a wild stallion who had been unharnessed and let run free.

There were no bounds or restrictions in place anymore, allowing his qi and blood to flow strong and hard. His meditation chamber began to tremble, and beyond it, the River-Defying Sect as a whole.

The power of his Undying Bones could be no higher. It surged through him like flood waters, pushing at him, screaming, until he realized that...

He was about to break past the Undying Bones level!!

He had truly reached the peak!

As the saying goes, when one is focused and works hard, good fortune is sure to follow. At this point, the mnemonic for the Undying Blood suddenly appeared, as though it had been branded in his soul and waiting for this moment.

As he went to work with the mnemonic, the remaining power of the Celestial’s blood-hair sprang into motion. A tremor passed through him, and he withered visibly, growing incredibly gaunt within only a few breaths of time.

If he hadn't been prepared for this very outcome, it would have been a big fright.

"It's gonna wither me to death!!" He immediately ceased the operation of the Undying Blood. Thankfully, there was nothing about the technique that made that impossible. Even the short moment that had passed left his face ashen, his vision dim, and his ears ringing.

After a long moment passed, he recovered. However, his face was still pale, and his heart still twitched with lingering fear. After examining himself inside and out, he almost cried.

"My life force...." His previously thriving life force had been drained by more than half in that brief few breaths of time.

"It wasn't this exaggerated before! This... this is even more frightening than Mistress Red-Dust and Song Junwan combined!" Scowling, he contemplated simply giving up on cultivating the Undying Blood.

He was truly worried that he would accidentally kill himself before mastering it....

"Don't tell me I'm going to have to go through another whole situation of using the Eternal Parasol...?" He smacked his forehead in irritation.

"This Undying Codex is the worst technique ever. Seems to me the point is to turn good people into villains!" Depressed, he thought back to how he had once been a pure and naïve youngster, only to start cultivating the Undying Skin, and turn into the Chicken-Thieving Fiend....

And then there was his time in the Blood Stream Sect, when he snuck around other people's immortal's caves, stealing qi and blood for the Undying Heavenly King....

After that came the Undying Tendons, where he had used pill concocting at the Great Wall as a front to embezzle everything he

needed....

And finally, out in the Wildlands, he had become a vicious hunter of life force to finish the Undying Bones....

“Is it all worth it? I'm a good person, after all! Maybe mastering the Undying Bones is good enough. It's pretty awesome on its own....” Sighing, he once again began to review the mnemonic for the Undying Blood.

The Undying Blood was the final level of the Undying Codex, and was the last step to mastering the full technique!

The Undying Skin provided incredible defensive powers. The Undying Flesh increased fleshly body power to shocking levels. The Undying Tendons provided explosive speed and power, although that was really only the first step. The Undying Bones was the second in that same vein!

The effects of that second leap upward were even more obvious. After he had mastered the Undying Bones, his defenses, his speed, his strength, and everything else had reached the peak!

At that time, he had possessed deva-level fleshly body power, to the point where, combined with his cultivation base, it would have been very difficult for a deva to catch him if he wanted to flee.

However, at that point, his Undying Codex had not been without flaws, nor had he been unkillable. After all, despite the shocking level of power he commanded, he could be easily drained. Calling upon just his Undying Emperor's Fist would leave him almost powerless.

Although he had been tough, and difficult to wound, he still required recovery time if he did get injured. Furthermore, most injuries that affected him would be extremely serious.

But... now that he could cultivate the Undying Blood, those weaknesses were disappearing.

Cultivating the Undying Blood was a process in which all of the

blood in one's body was replaced, one drop at a time.

It might sound dramatic, but once that happened, a person who cultivated the Undying Codex would have a hard time running low on power!

It was easy to imagine how heaven-shakingly, earth-shatteringly powerful the Undying Emperor's Fist would be in that situation!

Of course, the Undying Blood also brought a significant boost in overall fleshly body power. But that was secondary. The most significant benefit was the dramatic improvement of recovery power!!

After analyzing the information, Bai Xiaochun thought back to what it was like when he used the Undying Emperor's Fist. And then, he couldn't help but anticipate what it would be like to use it with the benefits of the Undying Blood.

And then there were the regeneration benefits. Couple that with the shocking power he would have at his disposal, and he would be a person few people in heaven and earth could kill....

"Demigods would flee from me, and I could even cause a big headache for the Celestial...." Bai Xiaochun's anticipation continued to grow. If he could just overcome the difficulties that came along with this type of cultivation, then one day, he would truly be undying. The thought of that caused his eyes to turn completely bloodshot.

"I don't care how I do it. It's all for my goal of being able to live forever.... I'm gonna go for broke!"

His eyes shone with complete determination. However, he didn't continue with cultivation at the moment; right now wasn't the proper time.

That didn't mean he couldn't seek enlightenment of the technique. After all, that would be the best way to ensure that his efforts proceeded smoothly.

“The Undying Blood... isn’t divided up into levels like the other parts of the codex!

“Essentially, the point of the Undying Blood is to replace the current blood in one’s body. At that point, every drop of blood inside me will be as boundless as a huge lake!

“The blood is divided into percentages... Once I replace one hundred percent of my blood... I will have eternally indestructible, Undying Blood!”

His thorough study of the information and mnemonic of the Undying Blood took several days. At that point, he looked up for a moment, then slapped his bag of holding to produce some medicinal pills.

“I’m going to try one more time! But this time, I’ll be extra careful!” From his attitude, it almost seemed like he was about to go into a dangerous duel. Eyes bloodshot, he drew upon the power of his fleshly body.

As he did, he found that, instead of a whirlpool inside of him... there were many whirlpools! Every drop of blood was a whirlpool that ravenously devoured his life force!

He almost cried when that happened. That was especially true when he found that the power of any medicinal pills he consumed were instantly sucked away by the vortexes.

He quickly ended the session of cultivation. However, that was when his jaw suddenly dropped, and he looked in the direction of the Blood Stream Division, and... the Blood Ancestor!!

Chapter 897: Hold My Breath Today, Awaken Tomorrow

Because Bai Xiaochun had been so involved with the Undying Blood, and the shocking speed with which it drained his life force, he had failed to notice something happening with the Blood Ancestor.

As of this moment, he felt a sensation of grief and anger inside of him, as well as a profound level of focus!!

Furthermore, a heaven-shaking howl suddenly erupted into his ears.

“Hold my breath today, awaken tomorrow. When I arouse... I will fight!!”

Those few short words caused a sensation of profound astonishment to fill Bai Xiaochun. In fact, he almost felt as if the words had originated within himself.

The qi and blood fluctuations within the words were the same as his own. Whoever spoke those words also cultivated the Undying Codex!!

“The Blood Ancestor!” This was the first time he had ever been able to sense any emotions from the Blood Ancestor, despite the fact that he had taken control of his body on multiple occasions in the past.

All of a sudden, he felt the desire to do battle, and could sense his blood coursing madly through his veins. For some reason, it seemed like the Blood Ancestor was calling out to him!

In addition to that, he was almost sure that he could sense... other similar fluctuations! They were weaker, and in different areas, but they absolutely contained the same fluctuations!

Those fluctuations were coming from two different areas... both

within the River-Defying Sect. It only took a moment for him to realize that one of those sources... was the monkey in the River-Defying Sect!

The other was... the talking rabbit in the Blood Stream Sect!!

This realization struck him to the core. As he continued to study the situation, he realized that there were other life force fluctuations in other areas that matched the Blood Ancestor... and all of them were familiar!

In one location, he saw a bird. In another, a tiger with wings. He saw a huge goose standing guard over something.... How could he ever forget those animals!? They were the very same creatures that had transformed after he fed them his special medicinal pills!!

“How is this even possible!?!?” he said with a gasp. He sagged in place, beads of sweat popping out all over his forehead as he ended his session of cultivation.

After ceasing all activity related to the Undying Blood, his connection to the Blood Ancestor and all of the small animals vanished. A long moment passed, and yet, the look of confusion on his face remained.

“Are all of those animals connected to the Blood Ancestor somehow?” All of a sudden, he realized that there was some profound mystery wrapped up in that matter from years ago.

“What exactly is going on here...?” he thought. After some more thought, he rose to his feet and rushed over to the Blood Stream Division. Soon, he was standing on the Blood Ancestor’s shoulder!

Normally speaking, only patriarchs would qualify to get this close to the venerated Blood Ancestor. Therefore, Bai Xiaochun was completely alone. Panting, he reached down and put his hand onto the Blood Ancestor’s skin, and yet, no amount of probing revealed any trace of life force. Bai Xiaochun even began to wonder if what he had sensed earlier had been an illusion.

“There’s no way I was mistaken!” he murmured. After a moment of silence, he actually entered the Blood Ancestor’s body, following the familiar route from the past until he was in the heart cavity.

Sometime later, he emerged out into the open. His journey... had been completely fruitless.

“Hold my breath today, awaken tomorrow.... Did the Blood Ancestor... not perish after all?” Mixed emotions filled Bai Xiaochun’s eyes. After the gravekeeper had passed on the mantle of the Hell-Emperor to Bai Hao, and after coming to know the Celestial’s story, Bai Xiaochun’s understanding of the world had changed. He had come to know that there were many secrets he was not privy to.

But now he came to find out that there were even more secrets!

“And what about Du Lingfei? What was she doing in a tiny place like the Spirit Stream Sect? Was it something to do with the Frigid School of the north? If so, why did she go to the Blood Stream Sect afterward...?” That question had been gnawing at him for years. Although he had come to the conclusion that it had something to do with the true spirit of the Spirit Stream Sect, that baby girl, now he wasn’t so certain.

He stood there in thought, a haze of thoughts running through his head. Time passed, although he wasn’t sure how much. At one point, a sound like muffled thunder could be heard from one of the mountain peaks in the Spirit Stream Division.

As the sound spread out, countless disciples looked up in shock. It also interrupted Bai Xiaochun’s train of thought, and he looked over at the Spirit Stream Division, his eyes shining.

“Patriarch Spirit Stream....” he murmured. The noise was coming from the secluded meditation facilities, where Patriarch Spirit Stream was attempting to reach the Deva Realm.

Shocking fluctuations erupted out, as well as an astonishing aura

that grew stronger with each passing moment!

“The patriarch is going to break through!!”

“The River-Defying Sect is going to have another deva!!”

“He’s definitely going to succeed!” The elders of the sect all hurried over to stand as Dharma protectors, Li Qinghou included. Patriarch Blood Stream and the other two patriarchs were also present.

Patriarch Spirit Stream’s breakthrough was a matter of the utmost importance to the sect. Thankfully, the grand spell formation had just been repaired, and it was activated to ensure that no mishaps occurred.

The disciples were trembling with excitement, and praying that everything would turn out well.

Bai Xiaochun buried his thoughts and questions concerning the Blood Ancestor, and focused on the important matter of Patriarch Spirit Stream.

Because of the unique way he had achieved his own breakthrough, he had not experienced what Patriarch Spirit Stream was currently experiencing, and therefore, couldn’t provide any advice. All he could do was rely on the power of his cultivation base to pay close attention, and be ready to provide any support necessary.

However, it was not for naught that Patriarch Spirit Stream had lived for so many years. After all, he had single-handedly led a tiny sect out of the delta region to the Lower Reaches, a sect which had grown and thrived until it was in its current position in the Middle Reaches. He was the top patriarch in that sect, a person with deep experience, and profoundly qualified in terms of cultivation base.

The only thing he had lacked in the past was the right opportunity!

Bai Xiaochun had given him that opportunity, and of course, he

seized it without hesitation. Rumbling thunder echoed out as Patriarch Spirit Stream's aura grew stronger. By now, his will had reached the point of being able to almost completely fuse with heaven and earth.

Seventy percent. Eighty percent. Ninety percent....

His cultivation base fluctuations grew more intense with every moment that passed. As everyone in the River-Defying Sect paid close attention, Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief, and smiled.

As he did, Patriarch Spirit Stream's will fused completely with heaven and earth!

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLLE!!

The clouds seethed, but no heavenly tribulation appeared. There was only a huge face floating high in the sky.

It was... Patriarch Spirit Stream's face!

Emotion was visible in his eyes as he stared down at all the living creatures below....

"Henceforth... I shall always protect... my home.... The River-Defying Sect!" His voice was filled with determination, focus, faith, and sincerity!

Patriarch Spirit Stream... had just sworn a Dao oath!!

Even as his voice continued to echo out, his will retracted from heaven and earth. He was only a Mortal-Dao deva, but with the extensive preparations he had made over the years, he now surpassed that level by far. He was actually as powerful... as the early Earth-Dao Deva Realm!

"Patriarch!"

"Patriarch!!"

"Patriarch!!!"

The disciples of the River-Defying Sect erupted into cheering.

And they weren't the only ones. The Nascent Soul elders joined in, as did the patriarchs from the Blood, Pill, and Profound Stream Divisions. Then, expressions of veneration appeared on their faces as they clasped hands and bowed deeply.

Chapter 898: Keep Her Safe....

In the Spirit Stream Division's mountains in the River-Defying Sect, the monkey sat there with an alcohol flagon, sipping occasionally, a glint of pleasure in his eyes as he looked up at the face of Patriarch Spirit Stream.

“To be able to see this makes it all worth it. Even if I end up paying a steep price for returning... it was all worth it!” The monkey laughed heartily, and then looked in the direction of the Blood Stream Division, not at Bai Xiaochun, but rather... at the rabbit, who was on one of the mountains, a blank look in his eyes.

Occasionally, the rabbit came to his senses, and at other times, he was muddle-headed. At the moment, he was clearly in possession of his faculties, and was feeling deeply moved.

Cheering filled the sect. Bai Xiaochun was feeling very pleased. Plus, now that Patriarch Spirit Stream was a deva, it took a lot of the pressure off him.

He could now leave the River-Defying Sect and go to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect without worrying too much about what would happen in his absence. Of course, considering his own high position within the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, that made the River-Defying Sect's position as a subsidiary sect even more stable.

With Patriarch Spirit Stream there, the only thing that could possibly be a threat to the sect would be a demigod. Anyone else would think twice, three times, or even four times before causing problems!

Furthermore, demigod experts were not common at all. In all of the Heavenspan River region... there were only four, all of them being patriarchs in the riversource sects.

Three days passed by in a flash. As news about Patriarch Spirit Stream spread through the Middle Reaches cultivation world, the

other three great sects, none of whom currently had a deva, didn't dare to cause any trouble. In fact, in their veneration, they sent tribute to the River-Defying Sect, and willingly bowed their heads in acquiescence....

If the three other largest sects acted in such a way, it almost wasn't necessary to mention the other smaller sects and cultivator clans. Word also spread to the Lower Reaches, where veneration for the River-Defying Sect grew more widespread.

Of course, in the Lower Reaches, many of the sects fell under the jurisdiction of the other three Middle Reaches sects. But right now, the River-Defying Sect was the number one sect in the Middle Reaches, and therefore, the small sects in the Lower Reaches knew that there would be dire consequences for offending them.

Although the River-Defying Sect hadn't completely unified the Middle Reaches, Lower Reaches, and delta regions, they had most certainly reached the ultimate level of power.

The matter was of course noted by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Under normal circumstances, they probably would have interfered to prevent a single organization from having so much power. After all, a situation like that would influence the resources available to the other deva patriarchs in the sect.

Unfortunately for them, Bai Xiaochun had accumulated so much glory in battle that he had received acknowledgement by the demigod patriarch himself. Because of that, Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian could do nothing other than grit their teeth and accept the situation. None of them offered even a single word of disagreement, not because they didn't consider it, but because they feared Bai Xiaochun too greatly.

There was another deva who was very torn about the situation, and that was the child deva from Sky Quarter. Theoretically speaking, the River-Defying Sect was under his control. However, when war had broken out, the child deva came up with endless

excuses to refrain from offering help.

Later, a second crisis developed, and the Hall of Steel Veins took action, whereas the child deva did not. After it was all over, the child deva pondered whether or not to increase his yearly tribute requirement from the River-Defying Sect.

After much consideration, he sighed and abandoned such thoughts. After all, he had heard about how terrifyingly powerful Bai Xiaochun was, and feared he might regret the consequences of trifling with him.

Without anyone causing any problems for the River-Defying Sect, it thrived, growing more powerful and expanding its territory. Two months passed.

Bai Xiaochun spent most of that time in secluded meditation, researching the Undying Blood, and thinking about what new technique he should cultivate now that he was a deva. After all, the River-Defying Sect was only a Middle Reaches sect. If he wanted deva techniques, he really needed to go to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to get one.

Although the Spirit Stream Division had once been the Frigid School from the northern Heavenspan River, they had only escaped to the east after suffering heavy losses. The fact that the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation had survived was almost a miracle.

Although the sect did have some incomplete deva techniques hidden away, Patriarch Spirit Stream refused to give any of them to Bai Xiaochun, stating that they weren't suitable. Instead, he urged Bai Xiaochun to go to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to make his choice.

Although he had no good deva technique, he did make progress with his Undying Blood, and actually succeeded in creating an entire drop.

That drop of invincible blood was not red, but gold, and as it flowed through his veins, it glittered brightly, and sent a holy aura out through him that left him feeling very pleased.

“Those medicinal pills made up for just about all the life force I have in me, and yet, that only got me one drop of blood....” He frowned. On the up side, he was neither very fat nor very muscular. If he was... then he might not have any hope of completing the Undying Blood.

Thankfully, the Undying Blood also came with a secret magic!

The other levels of the Undying Codex had the Throat Crushing Grasp, Mountain Shaking Bash, Undying Hex, and Undying Emperor’s Fist. As for the fifth level’s secret magic, it was called... the Godkiller!

The point of the Godkiller was... to kill demigods!

With the Godkiller technique, he could accelerate with indescribable speed. In much the same way that the Undying Emperor’s Fist could quintuple his fleshly body power, the Godkiller technique could increase his speed. It was almost impossible to imagine what such speed would be like.

And of course, the path to such god-slaying was... his indestructible blood!

When cultivating the Undying Blood, one’s blood did not become eternally indestructible until reaching the great circle. Before then, it was possible to fuel the Godkiller technique with Undying Blood, and use that blood magic to reach indescribable speeds!

With such speed, he wouldn’t even need to make an actual attack. As he accelerated with shocking speed, the blood qi which surrounded him would ensure that he could rock mountains by simply running into them. Even more shocking was that if he hit any living thing while using the Godkiller technique, he would be able to absorb some of their life force.

That nearly caused his eyes to drop out of their eye sockets. The Undying Codex really was an evil technique!!

“I almost can’t believe that a simple, pure, honest and kindhearted person like me... would end up cultivating an evil technique like this!” Frowning and sighing, he began to think of how to combine the Godkiller with the other techniques he already had.

For example, if he used the Godkiller and the Mountain Shaking Bash together... well, the mere idea caused his heart to start racing.

“What if I used it with the Throat Crushing Grasp...? If my opponent was still alive, I could follow up with the Undying Emperor’s Fist.... And if the fight kept going, I could combine my Undying Hex with the Godkiller, and nobody would be able to catch me!

“And that’s not even mentioning my divine abilities. If I threw in the Waterswamp Kingdom, my Heavenspan Dharma Eye, or perhaps the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation....” He couldn’t help but sigh at the realization of how awesome he was at this point.

“However, using the Godkiller technique wastes Undying Blood.... And right now, I only have one drop in me....” To think of wasting the Undying Blood that required so much difficult work to produce caused him to hesitate about whether to even use the Godkiller.

“The Godkiller obviously isn’t meant to be used in a fight. It’s supposed to be for getting life force!” A few more days passed, and eventually, he decided that the time had come to leave the River-Defying Sect and head for the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

After all, there was still the issue of his deva technique.

After making his decision, he said his farewells to Song Junwan, who had long since prepared herself for his departure. She didn’t

say much. She gently adjusted his clothing, and then embraced him.

Before he left, Patriarch Spirit Stream came to give him something very important from the Spirit Stream Division!

It was a crystal coffin, within which was... the body of a baby girl!

It was the Spirit Stream Division's most secret reserve power, the Frigid School true spirit!!

“Keep her safe,” the patriarch said softly. “You’re the only one in the Spirit Stream Division who can do it.... Keep her safe. That is our most important mission!”

Chapter 899: Returning To The Starry Sky

Dao Polarity Sect

“Patriarch....” Bai Xiaochun said, a look of shock on his face. He had assumed the patriarch had come to give him a magical item, or perhaps some other rare object. Never could he have imagined that the gift would actually be the Frigid School’s true spirit....

“Um... Patriarch, I don’t think it’s really appropriate for you to give me this true spirit. She’s so important, and I’m so clumsy! What if I accidentally drop her or something? If something bad happened.... Why don’t you give her to someone else?” He really had a strange feeling about the patriarch giving him a coffin as a parting gift....

Although the coffin contained a true spirit, it was still very odd, and didn't seem very auspicious as far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned.

“Take her with you....” Patriarch Spirit Stream repeated. The reason he was giving the coffin and the true spirit to Bai Xiaochun was because of all the deadly close calls the River-Defying Sect had been through. Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun’s return ensured that everything worked out fine in the end. But Patriarch Spirit Stream was still worried about what could happen in the future.

He didn’t want to gamble with the true spirit. Therefore, he gave the coffin to Bai Xiaochun, which he felt would be safer than keeping it in the River-Defying Sect. Most important was the fact that it was a suggestion by his Master, the monkey. Even though Patriarch Spirit Stream was now a deva, he still held eternal respect for his Master.

Bai Xiaochun could see how determined Patriarch Spirit Stream was. It didn't seem that he would take no for an answer! Feeling a headache coming on, Bai Xiaochun looked at the coffin.

“Why don’t we talk this over a bit, Patriarch? I really don’t think it’s appropriate. What if there’s a mishap...?”

“There won’t be any mishaps, and there’s no need for discussion. Take her with you, Xiaochun!” With that, Patriarch Spirit Stream clasped hands and bowed deeply.

Sighing, Bai Xiaochun shook his head and looked at the baby girl in the crystal coffin. Her eyes were closed, making it seem almost as if she had already perished. However, Bai Xiaochun knew that she wasn’t dead... just sleeping deeply.

Back when he had united the Lower Reaches sects to attack the Sky River Court, that baby girl had woken up and transformed into a god-like young woman!

Before falling back asleep, that young woman had looked deeply into Bai Xiaochun’s eyes, and then revealed to him the secret formula for the River-Defying Pill.

“I can barely take care of myself, let alone a true spirit!” he thought, frowning at the thought of essentially becoming a stay-at-home dad. However, he knew that this little girl was extremely important to the Spirit Stream Division. After all, Patriarch Spirit Stream had told him long ago that the original reason why the Spirit Stream Sect wanted to make their way upriver was for the sake of this girl.

After more vacillating, Bai Xiaochun looked at Patriarch Spirit Stream and then back at the crystal coffin. Finally, he nodded reluctantly. No matter how much he wanted to avoid accepting the coffin and the profoundly mysterious baby girl, he really had no choice.

When Patriarch Spirit Stream saw that Bai Xiaochun was agreeing, he sighed in relief. After looking one last time at the baby girl in the coffin, he left Bai Xiaochun’s immortal’s cave.

“Ah, whatever,” Bai Xiaochun thought, shaking his head and

sighing. He waved his sleeve, pulling the coffin into his bag of holding. As he did, he suddenly remembered something, and shouted, “I know you’re in there, little turtle! You listen up. Behave! You’re absolutely not allowed to bother the girl in that coffin!”

Although he didn’t get any response, he was sure that the little turtle had heard him. After putting the coffin away, he meditated through the night, and then rose to his feet at dawn. Flying up into the air above the River-Defying Sect, he looked down and sighed, then transformed into a beam of light that shot in the direction of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

“Back when I left the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, not very many people knew me. But things are going to be different now.” Thinking smugly about his deva cultivation base, and how he was the sixth deva in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, he couldn’t help but start to get excited.

“I wonder how my inn is doing. And what the hell have Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai been up to? Back when the sect was in danger, why didn’t they come back to help?” He suddenly started to feel a bit uneasy. It didn’t make sense for Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai to act like that.

“Did something happen to them?” he thought, speeding up a bit.

Considering the level of his cultivation base, it didn’t take much time or effort for him to get through the Middle Reaches. Before long, he was on the border of Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. As he neared, he sensed three auras reaching out to scan him. Almost immediately, they shrank away in shock.

Moments later, three people flew out from a nearby mountain, where they clasped hands and bowed in his direction.

“Well met, Patriarch Bai!”

They wore the garments of Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect disciples,

and were tasked with standing watch over this border region of the sect. They had heard the news about Bai Xiaochun, and considering that they were the closest spot between the main sect and the River-Defying Sect, they had been waiting for Bai Xiaochun to show up. At a single glance, it was possible to see how nervous they were.

Bai Xiaochun didn't know them, but was pleased with how they were treating him. Claspng his hands behind his back, he struck the pose of someone of the elder generation, and nodded magnanimously before speeding along his way.

Upon his departure, the three disciples breathed sighs of relief and then exchange glances. All of them could see the veneration in each other's eyes.

“Who would have thought that somebody like him, a nobody from a tiny sect, a simple hostage, would end up as a deva patriarch from the Hall of Steel Veins...?”

“You make it sound like becoming a deva patriarch is an easy thing. I heard that right after Patriarch Bai became a deva, he defeated three other experts who were in the mid Deva Realm. Then the sect's demigod patriarch looked with favor upon him.”

“Yeah, that's right. It's too bad we weren't friends with Patriarch Bai back when he first came to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. If we had, we would already be on the path to fame.” Sighing, the three disciples took out transmission jade slips and sent news back to the sect about Bai Xiaochun's arrival.

Word soon began to spread that Bai Xiaochun was on his way. The Hall of Steel Veins was the first to react, and emerged en masse to form ranks and wait for his arrival.

All 100,000 members of the Hall of Steel Veins were present, including many soldiers from the five legions. It was a shocking sight to anyone present to see it.

Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian were not happy at all. After returning to the sect, all of them had gone into secluded meditation. Considering that, some of the disciples under their command also went into meditation, whereas others went out to receive Bai Xiaochun.

For the most part, though, the disciples of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect emerged to greet Bai Xiaochun upon his arrival. Some knew him, but most were strangers. However... even the strangers knew of his name.

“Patriarch Bai was once a hostage from the River-Defying Sect. He instituted a reign of terror as soon as he arrived in Sky City.”

“He also caused a big stir when he made it into the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars!”

“You’ve never heard of Bai Xiaochun? Well, you’ve heard of that inn over in Sky City, right? That’s his! That entire 50-kilometer area is his personal property!”

A buzz of conversation soon filled the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Of course, there had been a lot of talk about him after he was bestowed a title by the demigod patriarch. Therefore, as soon as the Hall of Steel Veins went out to prepare for his arrival, the talk intensified.

Of course, there was one patriarch in the Hall of Steel Veins who looked particularly happy. He waved his hand, causing bells to ring out to fill the entire sect!

They tolled eight times, which indicated that someone of incredibly high status was coming. In fact, the only higher number of bell tolls was nine, which was reserved for demigods. Eight bell tolls meant a deva was coming!

As the bells tolled, ripples spread out through the sky, causing immense pressure to weigh down on the disciples. At the same time, everyone looked off into the distance, where a beam of light

appeared, shooting at top speed toward the sect!

In the four cities beneath the rainbow structure were countless people looking up at that beam. Whether or not they knew Bai Xiaochun, they were all deeply shaken.

As for the cultivators from the Hall of Steel Veins, they were the most prepared of all. As soon as Bai Xiaochun appeared, they joined their voices together into one mighty, thunderous greeting. “We offer respectful greetings, Patriarch Bai!”

Chapter 900: Take It Out On Chen Hetian!

It was with this solemn reception that Bai Xiaochun entered the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

The demigod patriarch didn't appear, but he had already issued a Dharmic decree giving Bai Xiaochun an area of his own on the blue rainbow. That was where his immortal's cave was located.

In the past, there had only been five people who qualified to live on the blue rainbow, but now there was a sixth!

What left the disciples of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect even more shaken was the knowledge that this Patriarch Bai Xiaochun was no ordinary deva. Even after having just reached the Deva Realm, he dominated three of the other deva patriarchs, and also killed three devas from the Middle Reaches. Battle achievements like that were essentially heaven-defying in nature.

Few people would be willing to provoke someone that strong. Besides, the newly-appointed Patriarch Bai Xiaochun had another role in the sect that made him even more domineering. He was a deva patriarch in the Hall of Steel Veins!

The Hall of Steel Veins had always been a very powerful force within the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. They were warrior cultivators who had fought for years in bloody campaigns along the Great Wall, and had shockingly murderous auras. They were the type of people who no one would dare to provoke.

Bai Xiaochun had incredible battle prowess, and an extremely high position in the sect. A deva patriarch like that was the type who would naturally leave the whole sect feeling shaken, and would be the subject of much respect and adoration.

Because of that, he had absolutely no spare time after his return. Every day, crowds of visitors flocked to his immortal's cave on the blue rainbow.

Patriarch Steel Veins was the first to arrive. The two chatted merrily for a bit, and eventually agreed to form a loose alliance between the two of them. Afterward, the patriarch left, smiling the entire time.

The second person to visit was the child deva from Sky Quarter Rainbow. It was a bit awkward at first. They made some small talk, and then he expressed his goodwill, hoping to put behind them the fact that he hadn't stepped in to help the River-Defying Sect.

Next came numerous Nascent Soul cultivators, who offered respectful greetings, as well as gifts, in the hopes of forging a good relationship with Bai Xiaochun. Some of them were experts from Sky Quarter Rainbow, former rivals and enemies who, despite having mixed feelings, expressed nothing but friendly respect.

Bai Xiaochun handled all of these situations with ease. After all, he had built up a lot of experience with this kind of thing over the years. He had become especially used to having a high position of authority back in the Wildlands, and had grown very used to conducting himself properly. He put pressure on some people, and treated others coldly. He greeted certain individuals warmly, and joked with others.

Of course, everything that was happening was being closely observed by the devas who were his neighbors.

Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian all snorted coldly in their hearts, and yet could do nothing other than sit there quietly. They knew that it wouldn't be wise to stir up trouble right when Bai Xiaochun was making his big debut.

There were a few people who Bai Xiaochun treated with particular warmth and sincerity when they came to visit. One of them was the hallmaster from the Hall of Devil Slayers, who had received hints from Du Lingfei to watch out for Bai Xiaochun. His name was Feng Youde!

Feng Youde had prepared a lavish gift for Bai Xiaochun. As far as

he was concerned, he had struck it very lucky over the years. After doing as he said he would do, and taking care of Bai Xiaochun, Du Lingfei had kept her promise. Although Feng Youde had not quite reached the Deva Realm because of her help, he was very close.

How could he ever have imagined that his decision all those years ago would benefit him a second time? After hearing that Bai Xiaochun had actually become a deva, he had immediately become very excited.

“Virtue has its rewards!” he thought, sighing emotionally. He treated Bai Xiaochun with the utmost respect, and was personally escorted out, which was a huge honor. After he left, he felt more wonderful than ever.

After three days passed, the stream of visitors slowed down, causing Bai Xiaochun to sigh a bit. He had very much enjoyed the busy three days.

Thanks to having so many visitors, Bai Xiaochun learned a lot about what had gone on in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect during his many years of absence.

He was also reminded that patriarchs from the Hall of Steel Veins were considered elders in the sect, and not just ordinary elders, but prime elders.

Furthermore, there were only six prime elders in the entire Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect! Underneath those prime elders were nearly a hundred Nascent Soul elders. Collectively, they made up... the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect’s Cabinet of Elders!

Unless the demigod patriarch interfered, the Cabinet of Elders essentially made all the decisions in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

Because of their place in that organization, Chen Hetian, Bai Zhentian, Li Xiandao, and the child deva Li Yuanda had the power and authority to manage all aspects of the sect. Whether it was

affairs downriver, alliances with other riversource sects, or communications with Heavenspan Island, it was within the scope of their responsibilities.

Matters both big and small were determined by those four devas. However, the one thing they had no say in... was war!

War... was the jurisdiction of the Hall of Steel Veins. Before, it had been the sole responsibility of Patriarch Steel Veins. But now, Bai Xiaochun was being added to the mix. The two of them were the only ones who could send the ancient and powerful Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect into battle.

Of course, the demigod patriarch could overturn any order. However, when it came to the fighting at the Great Wall, or other conflicts in other areas, the Hall of Steel Veins always took the lead.

Because of the incredibly high status that Bai Xiaochun now had, he qualified to look into many areas of inquiry that had been closed to him before.

For example... Heavenspan Island!!

For example... Du Lingfei's status as Heavenspan emissary!

For example... Hou Xiaomei and Ghostfang!

Based on everything that he had seen in the Wildlands, matters pertaining to Heavenspan Island weren't as much of a mystery anymore. Although he didn't understand everything fully, he had a pretty good idea.

The Celestial really was the emperor of the Heavenspan River region!

The four riversource sects corresponded to the Wildlands' four heavenly kings, and acted like regional governors!

Heavenspan Island was where the Celestial's Palace of the Dao was located.

And when Du Lingfei went out on missions... she ranked the same as a demigod!

In terms of the selection process which had ended up taking Hou Xiaomei and others to Heavenspan Island, Bai Xiaochun was now able to confirm that it really was just a matter of course.

“Du Lingfei... left the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect quite a few years ago. She went back... to Heavenspan Island.” Bai Xiaochun currently held a jade slip of information in his hand. By now, he had some speculations regarding why Du Lingfei was the Heavenspan emissary.

As soon as the idea popped into his head, he tried to suppress it. However, a strange expression gradually took over his face. After some more thought, he blinked a few times and then cleared his throat.

“If I’m right... that would be terrifying.” He rubbed his nose, then waved his hand to put the jade slip away. Now that he was a deva and prime elder, no secrets could be kept from him in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, except secrets protected by other devas with equal standing to himself.

From that, it was possible to see how important he was now. He truly was an important person whom all disciples looked up to in awe.

Bai Xiaochun was more than pleased by that, and would normally have taken time to strut around and bask in the adoring gazes of everyone in the sect.

But right now, he wasn’t in the mood for that. Despite having so many people come to visit him during the past three days, he still had not heard any news about Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai.

It was almost as if they had gone missing. Even Feng Youde was baffled by the situation. He only knew that both of Bai Xiaochun’s friends had simply disappeared a year earlier.

When Bai Xiaochun heard that, he immediately came to the conclusion that... a deva was behind the situation!

Only people like that would qualify to do something like this and make sure he couldn't find any information about it.

Both Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai both had life slips in the River-Defying Sect, and therefore, he knew they were alive. But that didn't stop his anxiety from mounting. Sticking up his chin, he snorted coldly.

"It doesn't matter if I can't track them down. I'll just go visit Chen Hetian. Hmmmphh! From now on, if anyone bothers me, I'll take it out on him!" Of the three devas, Chen Hetian was the one he disliked the most, feelings which stretched all the way back to the Wildlands and the Great Wall.

Chapter 901: Chen Hetian

“I swore all the way back in the Wildlands that I would get my revenge!” A proud expression appeared on Bai Xiaochun’s face as he made his decision. Back at the Great Wall, Chen Hetian had acted with utter impunity. Completely ignoring how important Bai Xiaochun was, he had sent him into that labyrinth, and yet, that was not the end of his persecution. He then went on to oppress the River-Defying Sect.

“Hmmmphh! Alright, Chen Hetian, this isn’t me looking for revenge, it’s you being an intolerable bully. The matter’s set. When anyone bothers me, I’ll take it out on Chen Hetian!” Swishing his sleeve, he marveled at how important of a figure he was now.

“I can’t find Big Fatty Zhang, so I’ll take it out on Chen Hetian!

“If someone thinks about trifling with the River-Defying Sect, I’ll take it out on Chen Hetian!

“If someone looks at me the wrong way, I’ll take it out on Chen Hetian!

“If someone plots against me, I’ll take it out on Chen Hetian!”

Bai Xiaochun was convinced that he was so marvelous, no one would ever truly be able to comprehend the full extent of it.

That was especially true when he pondered how Chen Hetian would probably go crazy after what he was about to do. He chuckled excitedly.

And the truth was that was exactly how things would play out. Although he couldn’t kill Chen Hetian, his plan of venting his anger on him if anyone caused problems for him would drive the man crazy.

Although Chen Hetian was in the mid Deva Realm, in terms of battle prowess, he didn’t match up to Bai Xiaochun at all. The fact

that Bai Xiaochun had single-handedly fought five devas, killing two and seriously injuring three, left Chen Hetian completely struck with fear.

Were that not the case, he wouldn't have gone into secluded meditation after returning from the River-Defying Sect. And it was the same with Bai Zhentian and Li Xiandao.

And yet, Chen Hetian clearly didn't understand how Bai Xiaochun operated.... Never in his wildest dreams could he have imagined that going into hiding wouldn't stop Bai Xiaochun from coming to cause problems....

With the swish of a sleeve, Bai Xiaochun shot across the rainbow toward Chen Hetian's residence.

Chen Hetian had a sprawling, luxurious estate in the south of the blue rainbow district. Furthermore, he didn't live there alone; he had quite a few members of his clan in the estate with him.

All of the devas lived in such a way.

In the very middle of the sprawling estate was a lake of crystal-clear water, within which lazed a whole school of goldfish. The lake was actually part of the rainbow itself, which was a marvelous thing in and of itself.

Next to the lake was an ordinary-looking log cabin, which was actually a holy place to the Chen Clan. And as the patriarch of the clan, and a deva, it was only natural that Chen Hetian lived there.

As Bai Xiaochun whistled through the air, rumbling booms echoed out, and the clouds churned up above. Rippling distortions spread out in all directions from him.

It immediately attracted a lot of attention from the other disciples. Furthermore, because of the close proximity to where the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials were held, many people from there looked over as well.

“What's that sound?!”

“That’s... Patriarch Bai?”

Within the Chen Clan estate were numerous clan members who noticed the thunderous roar, much to their shock. When they looked over, they saw something like a shooting star rocketing toward them with incredible speed. A moment later, it was right there in the air above them.

Instantly, the pressure of a deva weighed down in all directions like the will of the heavens, casting the cultivation bases of everyone down below into full chaos.

The person up above was pure and fair, with a proud expression on his face, and his hands clasped behind his back. His chin was stuck up as though he were the most powerful expert in the world. He was none other than... Bai Xiaochun!

The fact that so many people were paying attention to him caused Bai Xiaochun to feel very pleased. Raising his voice, he said, “Chen Hetian, get the hell out here and greet Lord Bai!”

He had intentionally fused with heaven and earth and surpassed heavenly will, which made his voice boom especially loud. It was almost like an attack, a shockwave that caused many Chen Clan cultivators’ faces to fall as they staggered backward.

Even the disciples by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials could hear his words, and it caused quite a commotion.

“Elder Bai... went to cause problems for Elder Chen?”

“From the tone of Elder Bai’s voice, it sounds like he wants to fight!!” The cultivators in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect almost couldn’t believe what they were seeing, and many of them flew up into the air in the hopes of getting a closer look. After all, conflicts between devas, although not completely unheard of, rarely progressed past simple friction.

As Bai Xiaochun’s voice echoed out, Chen Hetian was seated cross-legged in the log cabin, meditating. Suddenly, his eyes

snapped open, and an expression of wrath appeared on his face.

Before the events at the River-Defying Sect, if anyone had done something like this, he would have snorted coldly, rushed out, and killed the offender immediately. But now, he simply gritted his teeth; after all, he knew that because of Bai Xiaochun's shocking battle prowess, the two of them weren't on the same level.

However, the fact that Chen Hetian was biting his tongue actually made Bai Xiaochun more irritated. Once again, he raised his voice and said, "What's going on, Chen Hetian? You're a deva, I'm a deva. Here I am at your front door. Don't tell me you aren't going to come out and say hi? How insolent!" With that, Bai Xiaochun took an angry step forward, heading into the Chen Clan and toward the log cabin.

The other Chen Clan cultivators were trembling in their boots, and didn't dare to interfere.

Within moments, Bai Xiaochun's incredible speed had him closing in on the log cabin. In fact, ripples spread out across the surface of the lake, and even the goldfish began to tremble in fear.

At this point, Chen Hetian couldn't hold back his anger any longer. He blurred into motion, flying up into the air and waving his hand to send a blast of wind at Bai Xiaochun.

"What are you doing, Bai Xiaochun?!?!"

At the same time, Bai Xiaochun unleashed a fist strike, striking the wind blast and sending a terrifyingly loud boom out in all directions.

Chen Hetian grunted and fell back a few paces. However, Bai Xiaochun's expression remained exactly the same as ever. His fleshly body was so powerful it didn't seem necessary for him to defend himself. In fact, he continued forward and prepared to unleash another attack.

"What am I doing? You brought this upon yourself, Chen Hetian!"

You know exactly what you did!” In the blink of an eye, he was right in front of him.

Chen Hetian’s face was a mask of grimness as he performed a double-handed incantation gesture to send another attack at Bai Xiaochun. A boom rang out, and Chen Hetian fell back further. However, Bai Xiaochun didn’t slow down at all.

Bai Xiaochun’s performance so far had Chen Hetian grumbling bitterly in his heart. His anger continued to burn, and yet, he still held back. As he retreated, he said, “The demigod patriarch already issued his orders about the River-Defying Sect, Bai Xiaochun. You’ve already killed Patriarch Starry River and Patriarch Dao River. What are you acting like this for!?!? What happened back at the Great Wall was a misunderstanding!”

“This has nothing to do with the River-Defying Sect or the Great Wall, Chen Hetian. Don’t play dumb!” Bristling with anger, Bai Xiaochun utilized his Undying Hex, blasting toward Chen Hetian. Performing an incantation gesture with his right hand, he waved, sending frigid qi blasting out, and summoning nine frigid projections. The projections immediately surrounded Chen Hetian on all sides.

Chen Hetian’s face fell. He quickly waved his hands out in front of him, causing a black shield of light to spring up and block the nine frigid projections. Falling back again, he angrily yelled, “What exactly are you doing, Bai Xiaochun?!?! I’m not playing dumb! Explain yourself!”

When Bai Xiaochun realized that Chen Hetian’s voice was louder than his own, he felt very displeased. With even greater volume than before, he shouted, “You’re the culprit here, and you want me to explain?! I’m not leaving until things are settled, Chen Hetian!”

“Y-you... YOU!!” Chen Hetian was absolutely enraged by this point. He could tell that Bai Xiaochun hadn’t come about the River-Defying Sect, and yet, couldn’t think of what it might be

about. After returning to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, Chen Hetian had gone directly into secluded meditation, and had done nothing to provoke Bai Xiaochun since. Therefore, when Bai Xiaochun called him a ‘culprit’, it caused his anger to burn even hotter.

It was a strange feeling. Chen Hetian was used to bullying other people, but now... he was the one being bullied....

“Bai Xiaochun!” he raged. “This is complete and utter bullying!!” Even still, he had no idea what he had done to provoke Bai Xiaochun.

Chapter 902: It Wasnt Me! It Wasnt!!!

“Complete and utter bullying!? How dare you, Chen Hetian!” Bai Xiaochun roared, clearly not ready to give up. Booms rang out over and over as they began to fight back and forth.

Everyone in the Chen Clan was completely shocked by what was happening, and the other cultivators watching from other locations were similarly astonished.

In fact, the other four devas on the blue rainbow sent their divine sense over to watch as well. However, neither Patriarch Steel Veins nor Li Xiandao or Bai Zhentian did anything to interfere.

Of course, both Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian were completely taken aback by the fact that Bai Xiaochun had Chen Hetian at a complete disadvantage. Furthermore, because of everything they had witnessed in the River-Defying Sect, both of them were leery of Bai Xiaochun, and currently didn't dare to get involved.

“This doesn't have anything to do with us....”

“What was Fellow Daoist Chen thinking? This is Bai Xiaochun's moment of triumph! What is he doing causing problems for him right now?”

“Oh well. He's the one who went and pissed off Bai Xiaochun, so he'll just have to resolve the situation on his own.”

After conferring briefly, both Bai Zhentian and Li Xiandao agreed that it was really Chen Hetian's fault for being so obtuse.

As for Chen Hetian, he was on the verge of going completely mad. If he were aware of why Bai Xiaochun was going all out to attack him, he might have been able to deal with the situation. But he really had no idea what was going on, and to make things worse, when he asked Bai Xiaochun to explain, Bai Xiaochun sarcastically responded that he already knew.

As Bai Xiaochun circled back around for another powerful attack,

Chen Hetian gritted his teeth, shot backward, and cried, “Did someone from my clan offend you? Is that what happened? If so, then it doesn’t have anything to do with me!!”

“Someone from your clan?” Bai Xiaochun shouted. “Like hell! It was you, Chen Hetian! Still trying to act dumb? You think I’m three years old or something!?!?”

Chen Hetian wanted to scream out loud in rage. It seemed completely impossible to communicate with Bai Xiaochun, and no matter how he wracked his brains, he couldn’t think of what he had done recently to provoke an insane reaction like this.

Chen Hetian’s expression couldn’t have been more unsightly as he backed up again. Bai Xiaochun was just too strong, and his defenses were virtually impenetrable. Chen Hetian simply had no way to deal with him.

It was about this time that an urgent voice rang out from a short distance away.

“Stop it, Xiaochun!!”

Two beams of light approached, containing a man and woman. They were none other than Zhao Tianjiao and Chen Yueshan.

Chen Yueshan seemed very anxious, whereas Zhao Tianjiao had a bit of a begrudging expression on his face. As soon as they had heard that Bai Xiaochun was going to see Chen Hetian, they had rushed over. They really had no choice but to come. On the one hand, Bai Xiaochun was their friend, but on the other hand, Chen Hetian was a Master and father to the two of them respectively....

If anyone else had come to interfere, Bai Xiaochun would have been able to simply ignore them. But he and Zhao Tianjiao had shared quite a few trials and tribulations. Plus, Zhao Tianjiao had done a lot for the River-Defying Sect, and had even defied Chen Hetian in his attempts to help.

Bai Xiaochun had long considered him a close friend. Therefore,

instead of continuing to attack Chen Hetian, he backed up a bit and looked over at Zhao Tianjiao.

Seeing that, Chen Hetian breathed a sigh of relief. However, he kept a very grim expression on his face as he stared coldly at Bai Xiaochun.

Zhao Tianjiao flew over at top speed, planting himself between Bai Xiaochun and his Master. Looking both anxious and slightly irritated, he said, “Xiaochun, you--”

“Eldest Brother,” Bai Xiaochun interrupted, “your Master has gone way too far this time. The reason I came here today has nothing to do with the River-Defying Sect. Your Master has committed a wicked and immoral act, and has bullied people to an outrageous degree!!”

When Chen Hetian heard that, he gritted his teeth even harder, and then loudly said, “You need to explain the situation clearly, Bai Xiaochun. What did I do to you?!”

“You want me to explain clearly?” Bai Xiaochun said, glaring back at him. “You did the deed, and yet you don’t know?! Fine. I’ll just beat the explanation out of you!”

His energy flared, and he made to advance. However, the irritated Zhao Tianjiao quickly interfered.

“Xiaochun!!” he said loudly.

Bai Xiaochun looked over at him, and stopped in place.

“Eldest Brother,” he said angrily, “this doesn’t have anything to do with you. Your Master has really just gone way overboard. Remember Big Fatty Zhang? And Xu Baocai? They’re good friends of mine, and fellow disciples to the both of us. However, your Master kidnapped them, and when I asked for them back, he pretended to not know what was going on!”

Zhao Tianjiao’s eyes widened with surprise. He had heard of Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai, and what Bai Xiaochun had said was

true; neither of them had been seen or heard from in quite a while. To hear Bai Xiaochun accuse his Master of snatching them actually caused Zhao Tianjiao to hesitate for a moment, and then look over at Chen Hetian.

Chen Hetian's eyes were as wide as Zhao Tianjiao's as he stared blankly at Bai Xiaochun. He really had no idea what was happening, and in fact, had never even heard of Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai.

Struggling to contain his wrath, he grated, "I didn't do anything to those two. I don't even know who they are! You have the wrong person, Bai Xiaochun!" The truth was that he really didn't want to have Bai Xiaochun pissed off at him, so therefore, he added, "That's not how I do things!"

"Well if you didn't do it, then who did!?" Bai Xiaochun said, his eyes narrowing angrily. Looking back at Zhao Tianjiao, he said, "I won't let this drop, Eldest Brother. Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai are good friends of mine, and right now, I don't even know if they're still alive. If this is really my fault, then I'll apologize later!"

With that, he dashed past Zhao Tianjiao toward Chen Hetian.

Moments later, booms rang out as the two of them began fighting again.

Zhao Tianjiao smiled bitterly as he looked at Bai Xiaochun and then Chen Hetian. Finally, he sighed. Obviously, he wasn't in a position to try to separate them, and furthermore, he actually suspected that his Master could be lying....

Chen Hetian felt like he was going crazy.

"I told you I didn't do it, Bai Xiaochun! Why are you acting like this!?!?"

Not willing to be out-shouted by Chen Hetian, Bai Xiaochun raised his voice even more as he shouted, "You're the only person

in the sect who I have a grudge with. If it wasn't you, then who was it? Drop the act, Chen Hetian! If you don't hand over Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai right now, then I'll escalate this to the demigod patriarch!"

Chen Hetian felt like blood was about to spray out of his mouth. Never before had he experienced this level of humiliation, and yet, he knew that he couldn't explain himself in a few short words. With that, his hand blurred as, instead of unleashing a divine ability, he pulled out a transmission jade slip to contact Bai Zhentian and Li Xiandao.

"Which of you two did it!?!?" he transmitted. "Dammit, you're completely throwing me under the bus!! The two of you had better explain yourselves!!"

When Bai Xiaochun realized that Chen Hetian was sending some messages, he stopped in place and blinked a few times, anticipation rising in his heart.

Earlier, both Bai Zhentian and Li Xiandao had been paying attention, and realized what was going on. Bai Zhentian didn't seem very fazed, but as for Li Xiandao, his face fell when he realized the truth.

Before he could do anything though, Chen Hetian's message came in.

Li Xiandao immediately began to wail in his heart. Although he was inclined to deny that he was involved, he could see how crazy Chen Hetian was going, and knew that lying now would only make things worse. So he sent a message back.

"Brother Chen... it's just a misunderstanding. Really... I asked around just now, and apparently one of the elders in my clan... accidentally kidnapped Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai."

As soon as the message came in, Chen Hetian whipped his head around to look at Bai Xiaochun. Eyes crimson, he threw the jade

slip out and cried, “See that! Well, do you?! Your two friends weren’t taken by me! I didn’t do it!! I didn’t!!! It was Li Xiandao! You got the wrong person, Bai Xiaochun!!!”

Bai Xiaochun caught the jade slip and looked at it, and immediately, anger began to burn in his heart. However, he kept that from showing on his face. Sticking his chin up, he snorted.

“Well, you can't blame me. Nobody forced you to go around looking like a villain all the time. Ah, whatever. Next time I have any problems like this, I'll just come to you for help. Alright, see you later.” With that, he turned and blurred into motion toward Li Xiandao’s residence.

If Chen Hetian hadn’t put the pieces of the puzzle together by this point, then he didn’t deserve to have lived for so many years.

“Heaven-damned Bai Xiaochun! Does he mean he’s going to come cause problems for me whenever he has the slightest inconvenience?! He's going to force me to help him whether I'm actually involved or not?!?!” Chen Hetian’s mood sank further. Were it not for the fact that he was a deva, he would already have been coughing up blood.

Off to the side, Zhao Tianjiao looked on, shaking his head and smiling wryly.

“This Bai Xiaochun is a complete scoundrel!!” Chen Hetian grumbled angrily. The mere thought of Bai Xiaochun coming to cause problems again in the future caused his vision to go dim. If he had known things would end up like this, he would never have done anything to offend him....

Chapter 903: Its A Misunderstanding....

“What did I do to deserve this...?” Chen Hetian mourned, wishing he could weep. He felt even worse when he looked around at the devastation caused by the fighting earlier, including countless destroyed buildings and structures.

“Someone else kidnapped his friends, but he came looking for me....” he grumbled angrily. The main thing he was worried about was the possibility of this scenario playing out again, and then another time after that, and so on....

“However, this is also a good opportunity. If he gets into a fight with Li Xiandao, I can make a big fuss about it.... The demigod patriarch has surely noticed that Bai Xiaochun came to cause trouble. Although he didn’t say anything, if Bai Xiaochun keeps up with this sort of thing, the patriarch will not be pleased!” Eyes flashing brightly with anger, he sent a message to Li Xiandao, hoping to secure his cooperation in turning the situation into a disaster for Bai Xiaochun.

“You’re setting yourself up for a catastrophe, Bai Xiaochun!”

Even as Chen Hetian plotted, Bai Xiaochun was weighing matters over in his heart. He hadn’t forgotten that the demigod patriarch was in charge of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, which meant that it wouldn’t be a good idea to push things too far....

Now that he had determined who the true culprit was, he knew how he would handle the situation. Pushing forward with incredible speed, he left a string of sonic booms behind him as he headed toward Li Xiandao’s residence.

As he closed in, a stream of deva will erupted out from the Li Clan.

Li Xiandao appeared and said, “Calm down, Fellow Daoist Bai. This is a misunderstanding, that’s all. A misunderstanding.... I’ve

already sent for your two friends. All you have to do is wait for a moment.”

With that, he clasped hands and bowed, a friendly smile on his face. Considering how short of a temper he had, if this were any other person he was dealing with, he would have attacked immediately and killed them. But he truly feared Bai Xiaochun, and his heart still trembled with terror based on what he had seen back in the River-Defying Sect.

In retrospect, he wished he could go back and do something to put Bai Xiaochun in check before he reached his full potential. But now he was a true chosen of the sect, with a limitless future. He was not the type of person to provoke, and thus, smoothing things out with him right now was obviously the best choice.

By now, he had received Chen Hetian’s message, and actually agreed with the other deva’s plan. And yet, he still wasn’t sure of exactly what to do. Until he decided for sure, the best thing was to still put on a show of deference in front of Bai Xiaochun. That way, Bai Xiaochun would look even more unreasonable and domineering to the demigod patriarch.

Based on what Li Xiandao knew of the demigod patriarch, the man might not necessarily intervene immediately when a deva started throwing his weight around, but he definitely wouldn’t be happy.

Furthermore, showing deference to Bai Xiaochun wouldn’t be a loss of face. After all, they were both devas, so taking the initiative to bow his head was an appropriate thing to do.

To Li Xiandao, anyone beneath the Deva Realm was nothing more than a bug. Only people in the same cultivation level as himself counted as powerful experts!

When Bai Xiaochun saw that Li Xiandao was acting deferentially, his eyes flickered, and he immediately came to the conclusion that something fishy was going on.

“You kidnap my friends and then tell me to calm down? What the hell, Li Xiandao?!”

Li Xiandao’s eyes flickered, and he backed up a few paces.

Seeing that, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes narrowed.

“Taking the initiative to bow his head, and trying to goad me into making a mistake? Well played, Li Xiandao!” Racing to come up with his next move, he accelerated, and then unleashed an attack. A moment later, he and Li Xiandao were fighting back and forth.

All of the cultivators on the other rainbows had shifted their attention from Chen Hetian to this new area. As for Chen Hetian himself, his divine sense was locked onto the area as well.

Chen Hetian really couldn’t contain himself. He hated Bai Xiaochun so much, and was so invested in plotting against him, that he began to chuckle coldly as soon as the fighting broke out.

“Beat him! The harder the better!” Feeling wonderful about how things were going, he kept his focus directed completely on the scene playing out.

Least under pressure was Bai Zhentian, who was also pleased with how things were playing out between Bai Xiaochun and Li Xiandao. At the same time, he was feeling very glad that, other than the River-Defying Sect incident, he had never done anything to build up a grudge between himself and Bai Xiaochun.

“What an unreasonable lunatic!” he thought, sighing. By this point, he realized that something seemed to be a bit off about Li Xiandao’s actions. But then he thought about what he knew of Chen Hetian, and quickly speculated as to what was going on. It actually made the current situation even more intriguing.

As the booms rang out, Li Xiandao fell back over and over again. Despite being in the mid Deva Realm, he found Bai Xiaochun to be a very tough opponent, with seemingly boundless energy. The divine abilities and magical techniques that Bai Xiaochun had at

his disposal were as troublesome for Li Xiandao as they were for Chen Hetian, and left him feeling almost completely helpless.

What had him feeling even more frustrated was that, as a deva patriarch, there was no way that he would go around causing problems for measly disciples who weren't even in the Nascent Soul stage. From what he remembered, it was an elder from among his subordinates who had taken Bai Xiaochun's friends. Later, the man had sent one of Li Xiandao's own grandsons to ask for his approval in the matter, and for help to make sure that no sect rules were violated.

By this point, he truly detested that grandson of his. Although, what irritated him the most was not the trouble itself, but the fact that his grandson hadn't come to remind him of the situation after Bai Xiaochun rose to power.

That lack of a reminder was what had led to the current situation. If the matter had been pointed out to him earlier, he could have resolved the situation by numerous means.

As he considered all of these things, he decided that since Bai Xiaochun seemed inclined to push things too far, then the best thing was to go along with Chen Hetian's plan. Therefore, he put an even more deferential expression onto his face.

"Listen to me, Bai, old pal. I already took care of the situation with your friends. They'll be here any moment! There's no need for this fighting! I'll definitely compensate you for everything!"

When Bai Xiaochun heard that, he snorted coldly in his heart. Taking a step forward, he said, "That's not how this is going to work. Ai. I don't really want to beat you up either. But I treated Chen Hetian unfairly earlier, and got in a big fight with him. Now that I have the real culprit in front of me, if I don't beat him up a bit, how would Chen Hetian feel? It just wouldn't be fair! And what would other people think?!"

Many jaws dropped among the onlookers in response to his

words. Strange expressions appeared, and many people even chuckled. At first, Bai Xiaochun's words seemed to make sense, but after thinking about it, most cultivators in the audience realized how nonsensical they were....

“What... what is that supposed to mean?”

“He had a misunderstanding with Elder Chen, and therefore has to go beat up Elder Li?”

Meanwhile, a stream of divine sense from the violet rainbow up above was focused on the events down below. It was the demigod patriarch, who earlier had been a bit irritated at Bai Xiaochun's actions. However, the words he had spoken just now caused the patriarch to smile. All of the irritation he had felt earlier quickly melted away.

The patriarch shook his head. He didn't like it when his subordinates started throwing their weight around too much, which could easily get out of control. However, Bai Xiaochun's words just now had revealed his true attitude!

Perhaps he had planned all along to word things that way, which would just go to show that Bai Xiaochun was somewhat audacious. People like that were often easy to control. Perhaps he hadn't planned the words out, but that would actually just make the situation more amusing.

The truth was that the demigod patriarch was actually very curious about Bai Xiaochun. Furthermore, the reason why he had been so quick to confer him with a title had to do with Du Lingfei.

In response to the words Bai Xiaochun had just uttered, Chen Hetian gasped.

As for Li Xiandao, he gazed deeply at Bai Xiaochun, and suddenly felt more on guard than ever. At the same time, he abandoned any thoughts of going along with Chen Hetian's plan.

“This guy doesn't just have incredible battle prowess, he's also a

profound schemer! Not only did he resolve the situation, he did it brilliantly!” A smile broke out on Li Xiandao’s face, and he clasped hands respectfully.

“Don’t worry, Fellow Daoist Bai. Whatever misunderstanding you had with Fellow Daoist Chen has nothing to do with the two of us. Maybe this little conflict can be the start of a new friendship!”

At the moment, Li Xiandao actually wasn’t very afraid of Bai Xiaochun; in fact, he actually felt no need to cause any problems for him.

Chapter 904: You Dropped Something, Fellow Daoist Bai

Bai Xiaochun had already received the approval of the demigod patriarch, and was now just like the other devas, a prime elder of the sect. A single remark from him completely foiled Chen Hetian's plan, a fact that Li Xiandao refused to believe the demigod patriarch didn't realize. The fact that the patriarch had still not intervened went to show what was really going on.

"Well," Li Xiandao thought, "this is probably the best opportunity to work things out with Bai Xiaochun." He quickly performed an incantation gesture, causing a screen of light to spring out, covering the both of them and giving them a certain level of privacy. Then he patted his bag of holding to produce a jade pendant.

The surface of the pendant was carved with three dragons and six phoenixes, and possessed a remarkable aura. The dragons and phoenixes almost seemed alive, and caused a swirling mist to spring up in the area.

A single glance at the pendant would reveal that it was an extraordinary item. Furthermore, it seemed to pulse with the will of the heavens. It was obviously.... a deva-level magical item!

"Fellow Daoist Bai, is this your jade pendant? I happened to pick it up earlier, and just realized that, based on the fluctuations, it must belong to you." Smiling, he waved his hand, sending the jade pendant flying over to Bai Xiaochun in a beam of bright light.

Although none of the lower-level cultivators could see what was happening, Bai Zhentian and Chen Hetian were able to observe easily. Bai Zhentian seemed slightly confused about it, but not Chen Hetian, whose eyes went wide.

Never could he have imagined that Li Xiandao would use this

method to try to work things out with Bai Xiaochun. It actually caused his heart to sink even further.

“How could this Li Xiandao ignore propriety so brazenly!? I can’t believe he would do something so shameless!” As far as Chen Hetian was concerned, Li Xiandao was showing how much of a complete rogue he was!

Bai Xiaochun seemed surprised as he reached out to grab the pendant. Then he looked back suspiciously at Li Xiandao for a moment, before his eyes glittered.

“This old man isn’t that bad after all!” he thought. Giving gifts to resolve a situation was oftentimes a good method, but could easily come across as insincere. Thankfully, Li Xiandao had worded things perfectly, making the situation much more palatable.

Bai Xiaochun was starting to calm down quite a bit, and actually resolved to use this method himself in the future. Clearing his throat, he tossed the jade pendant into his bag of holding.

“Eee? What do you know, this is my jade pendant! I knew I dropped it somewhere. It turns out you found it, Fellow Daoist Li!” Laughing heartily, he decided to see if he could push the envelope a bit. “You know what, Fellow Daoist Li? I happen to remember that, back when I lost that jade pendant, I also happened to lose a flying sword. A really expensive flying sword.”

When Li Xiandao heard this, his expression turned a bit stiff. However, he patted his bag of holding to produce a small blue sword that sent intense frigid qi out in all directions. As it hovered there in midair, it began to turn translucent, as if it might disappear at any moment.

Feeling very pleased, Bai Xiaochun quickly said, “Hahaha! That sword is a family heirloom! Many thanks, Fellow Daoist Li!” He made a grasping motion, causing the sword to fly over to him. After fondling it admiringly for a moment, he put it into his bag of holding.

“Congratulations, Fellow Daoist Bai,” Li Xiandao said, chuckling. “At long last, your belongings have been returned to you. By the way, the elder who snatched your friends did it without permission, and had help from someone else from the junior generation. Don't worry, I'll definitely provide compensation to make up for their mistake!” As far as Li Xiandao was concerned, material things, and even the two culprits, were not worth anything when compared to resolving the grievance with Bai Xiaochun.

By now, Bai Xiaochun realized that he couldn't continue to cause problems. In fact, he was just about to say something more when his expression flickered. Then, he and Li Xiandao both looked down at the Li Clan ancestral mansion below.

There, Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai had just stepped out into the open. Their faces both shone with healthy glows, and they wore sumptuous garments. Not a single wound or injury could be seen on either of them. They were escorted by a throng of Li Clan cultivators, who treated them with the utmost respect.

However, both of them had blank expressions on their faces, as if they had been caught completely unprepared by what was happening. Clearly, the Li Clan had scrambled to make all of this happen.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai were both in good condition, he breathed a sigh of relief. Smiling, he looked over at them, waved his hand, and called out a greeting.

Big Fatty Zhang looked back at him in shock, seemingly unwilling to believe his own eyes. As for Xu Baocai, when he caught sight of Bai Xiaochun, he gasped, and his eyes went wide in disbelief.

“Xiaochun!!”

“You're not dead!!”

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat, flicked his sleeve, and loudly said, “How could there possibly be anything in this heaven and earth that could lead Bai Xiaochun into death!?”

A strange expression appeared on Li Xiandao’s face. However, Xu Baocai and Big Fatty Zhang were used to Bai Xiaochun saying things like this. Therefore, it was at this point that the joy of being reunited with their old friend overtook their faces.

“You’re finally back, Xiaochun!!” Big Fatty Zhang rushed forward and embraced Bai Xiaochun. He had gained weight recently, and although he didn’t quite look like a mountain of flesh, he was still not thin by any means. In fact, his fat quivered with excitement as he hugged Bai Xiaochun.

When Xu Baocai recovered his composure, he hurried forward and instinctively began to offer some flattery.

“Junior Patriarch, you are definitely the most ultimate of chosen. Unmatched and unparalleled in the world! There is absolutely, positively nothing in this heaven and earth that could possibly lead Sect Uncle Bai into death. What’s so amazing about the Wildlands anyway?!”

When Bai Xiaochun heard the excitement in Big Fatty Zhang’s voice, and the flattery of Xu Baocai, warm happiness rose up inside of him. Back when he was out in the Wildlands, he had worried constantly about his friends Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai, who he had left behind in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

Clearing his throat, Li Xiandao interrupted Bai Xiaochun’s reunion to warmly say, “Your friends are back, Bai, old pal. Don’t worry, I’ll definitely provide you with handsome compensation for all of this!”

Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai were both taken aback by what Li Xiandao had just said. After all, despite the many years they had spent in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, they hadn’t had many dealings with devas, and thus didn’t immediately recognize Li

Xiandao.

However, they could tell that he was someone important. Otherwise, why would they have been escorted like royalty out of the Li Clan? Not only had they been given urgent treatment of their injuries, they had been treated with utmost respect. In fact, they had also been showered with gifts, along with pleas not to take their imprisonment to heart.

Neither of them could ever have imagined that they would be given so many gifts. However, when they realized that it was because Bai Xiaochun had used some unknown means to secure the help of someone extremely important in the sect, they were deeply shaken.

Bai Xiaochun glanced at Li Xiandao, then looked back at Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai. Thumping his chest, he said, "Eldest Brother, Brother Baocai, what do you two think? You must have had it pretty bad off recently. If there're any points of discontent you have, or anything in particular that you want, just say the word."

Li Xiandao smiled wryly, but didn't say anything. Instead, he looked expectantly at Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai.

All the other Li Clan cultivators also looked over nervously at Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai, pleading looks in their eyes.

The two of them blinked awkwardly, and exchanged glances, simultaneously rubbing their bags of holding. After all, they already had been given copious amounts of treasure.

Then they thought back to their imprisonment. Although it had been somewhat humiliating, they hadn't been in any mortal danger. It had only lasted for about a year, and in exchange, they had been given nearly a hundred years' worth of cultivation resources.

With such thoughts on their minds, they looked back at Bai

Xiaochun and shook their heads. Bai Xiaochun wasn't inclined to let things go so easily, especially considering the weak position Li Xiandao was in. However, it didn't seem appropriate to push the matter. Nodding, he clasped hands to Li Xiandao, and then took Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai with him as he left.

Afterward, the Li Clan cultivators finally breathed sighs of relief. At the same time, Li Xiandao's expression turned very grim and cold.

“Bring Li Yuansheng and that elder over here immediately!” The rumbling thunder of his voice struck fear into the hearts of everyone in the clan. Obviously, the time had come to settle accounts. Furthermore, it wouldn't just be Li Yuansheng who was punished for what had occurred, it would be his entire bloodline.

Considering how angry the patriarch was, no one dared to try to beg for mercy. Besides, nobody wanted to incur the further wrath of the most glorious figure in the sect right now, the deva patriarch, Bai Xiaochun!

After all, not even their own Li Clan patriarch had been able to stand up to him!

Chapter 905: Stop Joking Around, Xiaochun

Bai Xiaochun was bursting with happiness as he slowly led Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai across the blue rainbow toward his immortal's cave, reminiscing the entire way. It almost felt like they had gone back in time to when they had first arrived in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

Although Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai were happy to be reunited, they also couldn't stop thinking about how suddenly everything had just changed for them.

Finally, Big Fatty Zhang asked, "Xiaochun, which member of the senior generation was that just now?"

He could tell that Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base has made significant advancement. However, despite the fact that he himself was in the late Core Formation stage, he still couldn't assess its exact level.

Xu Baocai was only in early Core Formation, and as such, had even less of an idea of how strong Bai Xiaochun was. However, he could tell that there was something different and mysterious about him. In fact, if he closed his eyes, it was literally impossible for him to detect Bai Xiaochun's presence.

"Him? Bai Xiaochun blinked, and his eyebrows shot up. "Oh, that was Li Xiandao."

"Li Xiandao? Why does that name sound familiar?"

Big Fatty Zhang couldn't place who the name belonged to. However, Xu Baocai had a reputation for being able to know everything about a place, no matter where he went. Therefore, when he heard the name 'Li Xiandao', his eyes went wide, and he gasped.

"Li Xiandao!?!?" he blurted. "One of the five deva patriarchs of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect? That Li Xiandao!?!?"

In response to Xu Baocai's words, Big Fatty Zhang's jaw dropped.

"I remember now!" he said. "Li Xiandao is the deva patriarch of the Li Clan! He was the one who ordered Xu Baocai and me to be arrested! Xiaochun, you have no idea how wicked the Li Clan is!!" Shaken, Big Fatty Zhang went on to explain to Bai Xiaochun everything which had occurred in the years he had been gone.

Back when Bai Xiaochun left for the Great Wall, Big Fatty Zhang had been forming his Will Core. Neither he nor Xu Baocai had qualified to leave the sect, and thus had no choice but to stay behind in Sky City to manage the business at Bai Xiaochun's inn.

With guidance from Feng Youde, Big Fatty Zhang had eventually succeeded in his breakthrough. Because of his unique Will Core, he had achieved even greater success with his spirit enhancements. Furthermore, his battle prowess actually surpassed ordinary cultivators in his same cultivation level.

Eventually, he rose through the ranks of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars and came to be viewed as one of the top chosen in the sect.

Perhaps because of Big Fatty Zhang's rise to prominence, Xu Baocai also achieved a higher level of success. He never truly became one of the superstars. However, he was careful to make the right friends in the sect, and avoid offending anyone important.

Things had proceeded like that for some time, with Big Fatty Zhang making the most progress in his cultivation base. Eventually, word came back to the sect that Bai Xiaochun had gone missing, which was very upsetting to Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai. Although they wanted to go back to the River-Defying Sect, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was not the type of place where they could come and go whenever they wanted.

Therefore, they continued to act with the utmost caution within the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. However, because Bai Xiaochun was missing, the Li Clan chosen Li Yuansheng finally came back

for revenge. With Bai Xiaochun out of the picture, he felt confident enough to strike at Bai Xiaochun's inn in Sky City, and take it away from Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai.

During the process, he injured Xu Baocai so badly that, if Big Fatty Zhang hadn't been there to save him, he would have been killed.

The grudge with Li Yuansheng had started many years ago, and his act of taking the inn away made it even worse. Unfortunately, Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai weren't strong enough to do anything about it, and were forced to simply grit their teeth in frustration. Thankfully, Bai Xiaochun's old friend Zhao Tianjiao had come back to the sect by that time, and was able to look out for them.

The two of them were aware of the friction between the River-Defying Sect and the other three sects in the Middle Reaches, but being mere Core Formation cultivators, they couldn't get back to the sect easily. Therefore, Big Fatty Zhang had focused hard on his cultivation in an attempt to break into the top 20 of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars.

According to the rules of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, the disciples in the top 20 were considered official chosen within the sect. If Big Fatty Zhang could reach that rank, then he would qualify to return to the River-Defying Sect.

Big Fatty Zhang went crazy with his cultivation. One year, he finally achieved his breakthrough and reached the late Will Core stage. That was when he went to make his attempt at the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars. However, it was at around the same time that Li Yuansheng also reached late Core Formation, leading to a big competition between the two of them.

Li Yuansheng was a chosen, but in terms of battle prowess, he couldn't match up to Big Fatty Zhang with his Will Core. Therefore, Big Fatty Zhang defeated him, breaking into the top 20

and leaving Li Yuansheng behind in 21st place.

The conflict between them grew more intense after that, until it reached the breaking point. Ignoring the possibility of offending Bai Xiaochun's old friends, Li Yuansheng called upon the power of his clan to frame Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai. He even begged for help from his patriarch Li Xiandao, and a Nascent Soul elder, which ended up with Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai being arrested!

If Big Fatty Zhang hadn't broken through into the top 20 of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars, then Li Yuansheng would have gone so far as to have him killed. But Big Fatty Zhang had achieved a high enough status that not even deva patriarch Li Xiandao dared to end his life. Instead, he had the two of them imprisoned. Li Yuansheng hadn't been willing to give up, and called upon his connections in the sect to have their sentence officially set at a full sixty-year-cycle!

That was the reason why Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai hadn't returned to the sect to help during the war; they had both been imprisoned, and didn't even know about what was happening on the outside.

When Bai Xiaochun heard about all of this, his expression turned grimmer and grimmer. Now that he knew the truth about everything the Li Clan had done, his heart turned as cold as ice.

And it all stemmed from the years-long grudge between himself and Li Yuansheng.

"Eldest Brother, Xu Baocai," he said through gritted teeth. "I'm definitely going to get you some major compensation for this! Let's wait and see how exactly Li Xiandao handles the matter. If it doesn't meet with my approval, or if he tries to cover for Li Yuansheng, then... I'll just go beat the crap out of him!" With that, he snorted coldly.

In response to his words, Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai

exchanged awkward glances. A moment passed, and then Xu Baocai said, “Junior Patriarch, um... Li Xiandao is a deva....”

Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin up and flicked his sleeve.

“Who gives a crap that he’s a deva!?” he said proudly. “I’m a deva too!”

Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai were visibly stunned. In fact, his words were so shocking that they didn’t actually dare to believe him.

Big Fatty Zhang stepped forward nervously and felt Bai Xiaochun’s forehead. “Xiaochun... are you okay?”

“I really am a deva!” Bai Xiaochun said, not sure whether to laugh or cry.

“Oh, Xiaochun, you don’t need to explain. We believe you!” Changing the subject, Big Fatty Zhang said, “Oh, right. Who did you get to convince Li Xiandao to let us go?”

“Nobody, Eldest Brother, I--” However, instead of finishing his sentence, he looked up at a group of seven or eight disciples who had just come out from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials, and were preparing to leave the rainbow.

“Hey you, come over here and tell my friends who I am!”

The disciples were initially taken aback, but then quickly flew over and offered respectful bows.

“Greetings, Patriarch Bai!”

Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai were stunned. They actually knew two of these disciples, who were both in the top 50 of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars. One of them was actually a top chosen who was in the teens in terms of the rankings.

“Um... stop joking around, Xiaochun....” Big Fatty Zhang said, panting a bit, still not quite able to convince himself that it was true. As for Xu Baocai, he was trembling, and his eyes shone with

profound shock.

“I really am a deva! I'm the sixth deva of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!” Having no other way to convince them, he unleashed the power of his cultivation base. Everything began to shake, and crashing sounds filled the air like thunder. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun's face appeared high above in the air, looking down superciliously at all creation!

His will descended from above like the will of the heavens!

Chapter 906: Sun-Moon Vast-Sky

Incantation

As Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base thrummed with power, the face up above emitted more and more pressure. A moment later, he retracted his cultivation base power, and the face vanished.

“Y-you... you....” Big Fatty Zhang could hardly breathe, to the point where his face turned crimson. Utter disbelief shone in his eyes, and his mind spun as surely as if someone were hitting him in the head.

Xu Baocai's reaction was similar. As he thought back to everything that had just happened, suddenly, it all made sense. Li Xiandao's politeness, and the fact that the Li Clan had suddenly treated him and Big Fatty Zhang like royalty... was all because of Bai Xiaochun's status in the sect!

“Bai Xiaochun... is a deva....” Big Fatty Zhang's heart began to pound with excitement, and then his eyes started shining. He slapped his thigh. “Hahaha! From now on, nobody in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect will dare to mess with me!!”

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased to see Big Fatty Zhang so excited. Thumping himself on the chest, he said, “That's right. Nobody in the sect will ever cause problems for either of you, ever again!”

Xu Baocai had obviously already reached the same conclusion. He couldn't help but think about all of the female cultivators he had taken a liking to over the years, none of whom had ever paid much attention to him. But things were different now....

“Now that the junior patriarch is a deva,” he thought, “the fact that I'm so close to him means that those girls will start banging down the door to get to me!” His excitement about what was to come began to soar to epic heights.

As for Big Fatty Zhang, his heart was racing, both with

excitement for Bai Xiaochun, and also anticipation for the future.

He had endured quite a bit of hardship in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, mostly because he had no powerful person backing him. He and Xu Baocai had been forced to swallow their anger and act with the utmost caution in everything.

But now everything had changed. His close friend was a deva patriarch, which meant he had free reign to act however he wanted to in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

And thus, Bai Xiaochun led the elated Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai back to his immortal's cave on the blue rainbow. Now that he was a sect elder and a deva, he had a residence that was roughly the same as those of the other devas.

The only difference was that he had no clan to occupy the area. And thus, he immediately invited Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai to live with him.

His residence was filled with countless spectacular buildings and structures, as well as strong spiritual energy from the Heavenspan Sea. As far as Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai were concerned, they were living in a dream now.

“Xiaochun, I’ve made a decision,” Big Fatty Zhang announced. “We need to have a powerful faction of our own within the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. The other five deva patriarchs all have a bunch of powerful experts working for them, and we need the same thing! I’ve gotten to know a lot of people over the years, so we should have plenty to pick from!”

“That’s exactly right,” Xu Baocai said. “There are plenty of disciples in the sect who have yet to realize their dreams. Now that you’re a deva, Junior Patriarch, it's the perfect way to give them their shot at glory.” With that, he pulled a little notebook out of the folds of his robe and started flipping through it to identify potential recruits.

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased with how enthusiastic Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai were acting. After some thought, he decided that they were exactly right. After all, he already missed his army of corpse troopers from back in Arch-Emperor City. Therefore, he immediately gave Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai authorization to start gathering people to form a new faction.

In fact, at Xu Baocai's request, he issued a Dharmic decree, giving the two of them the power and authority to do it officially.

With that, they hurried away, Dharmic decree in hand, eager to make contact with their network in the sect, both to show off, and also to gather people to their side to go harass their enemies.

With an official Dharmic decree, the sky was the limit!

Now that he had rescued his friends, Bai Xiaochun could finally relax. Most of the important tasks he had set out to do had now been accomplished.

With Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai tasked with building up power within the sect, he could relax and start thinking about his cultivation.

"I need to keep working on my Undying Blood, but that requires a lot of life force.... Now that I'm a deva patriarch, that shouldn't be too hard to accomplish. But I still need a deva technique." After some thought, he stood up and vanished, to reappear in a central location on the blue rainbow, where a seven-story pagoda rose high into the air.

It was called the Starry Sky Pavilion, and was a repository for many of the legacies in the sect. Quite a few divine abilities and magical techniques were kept there. As for the deva-level Daoist magics, they were specifically stored on the seventh story.

An ordinary disciple could visit the lower six stories if they had a high cultivation base and plenty of merit points.

But Bai Xiaochun was a prime elder, which meant he had free

access to the entire Starry Sky Pavilion. Furthermore, there were no merit point requirements for him. Including him, there were only seven total people in the sect who had such access: the devas, and the demigod patriarch.

Bai Xiaochun materialized directly on the seventh story of the pagoda. The only thing present there was a simple, unadorned table, in the middle of which rested nine ancient bamboo slips.

They were clearly items which had existed for countless years, and all of them had cracks covering their surfaces. Obviously, they were all originals, and not copies.

Surrounding the nine bamboo slips were three rings of jade slips, which contained several dozen different techniques. Obviously, the jade slips were inferior to the bamboo slips, and contained incomplete techniques.

He sent some divine sense out to scan the various slips, and was shocked by what he discovered. “They're all deva-level Daoist magics?”

Back in the River-Defying Sect, they only had two deva-level Daoist magics, which were both incomplete.

But the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had many. Bai Xiaochun now had a much clearer understanding of how deep the reserve powers of the sect ran.

After scanning all of the techniques with divine sense to get a basic idea of what they were about, he confirmed his previous conjecture that the nine bamboo slips were the most complete of the various techniques. He saw Li Xiandao's sword technique, Chen Hetian's devil technique, and Bai Zhentian's cosmic chessboard.

Of course, before selecting a given technique, he could only see its basic description, and none of the important details.

The three concentric rings of jade slips all contained incomplete

techniques, with the outermost of the rings containing the least complete of all. Some of the techniques he recognized as ones used by Patriarchs Starry River, Dao River, and Polarity River. There were also some that he had never heard of before.

“The ones in the middle of the table are the best....” he thought, frowning. After looking at the nine bamboo slips again, he realized that, despite how complete they were, they were all in completely different categories than the techniques he had cultivated up til now. They were core deva-level Daoist magics of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and in order to cultivate them, one needed to have a certain foundation of techniques to work upon.

“Back in Core Formation, I worked on the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation. In the Wildlands, I reached the Nascent Soul stage by using spirit enhancement techniques, and therefore didn’t get a special technique. Now that I’m a deva, it’s very important that I get an appropriate Daoist magic.” After more thought, he examined what was available, until something caught his eye on the outermost of the three rings. The only downside to it was how incomplete it was.

It was called the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation!

Just as its impressive name indicated, cultivating it allowed one to produce an additional sun and moon in the sky!

Supposedly, it was a technique that came from the ancient Arch-Emperor Dynasty. It had been incomplete when discovered, and its true origins had never been determined. However, after much research, it was determined that cultivating it all the way to the ninth level would allow one to break into the Demigod Realm, and consume suns and moons!

“It’s too bad that this version of the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation only goes up to the third level.... That would get me to the mid Deva Realm. The rest of the technique... has been lost to the sands of time.” Bai Xiaochun was torn about what to do.

Chapter 907: Like A Fish Back In Water

Also inscribed on the jade slip was information from three deva patriarchs of the past, people who had long since perished, but who had cultivated the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation.

That information contained tips and bits of enlightenment from those three patriarchs. Most of them expressed regret at not having the full technique. One of them even pointed out that the full technique would be powerful even after breaking through to the Demigod Realm!

It truly was a domineering technique, and very different from other, ordinary deva-level Daoist magics. By refining the spiritual power of heaven and earth, one could create a sun and a moon inside oneself. When those heavenly bodies emerged out into the open, they would truly be a second sun and moon in the vast sky!

It was a level of power that was shocking to even contemplate! The technique didn't require any specific foundation, only a deva cultivation base. It contained countless variations within it, and could be used in combination with any other technique.

The main downside was that it only consisted of the first three levels.... Furthermore, the third level had been added by a past patriarch, and was therefore a derivative technique, and not authentic. The second level was the highest authentic level in the entire technique.

Anyone who cultivated it would eventually have to change to another technique after reaching the mid Deva Realm, which was exactly what the other three patriarchs who had cultivated it ended up doing.

"None of the other techniques will work for me, so I guess I'll pick this one.... Although it will only work for so long, considering that my apprentice is the Hell-Emperor, and an omnipotent genius, it's always possible that I might be able to work out the

higher levels on my own.” After a bit more thought, he gritted his teeth, grabbed the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation, and left the Starry Sky Pavilion.

He reappeared moments later back in his residence, where he went into secluded meditation and poured himself into the study of his new technique. The more he learned about it, the more he realized it was truly astonishing.

“This thing shouldn’t be called the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation. It should be called the Sun-Moon Super-Overpowered Incantation!

“The first three levels are devoted to summoning a moon inside oneself. After reaching the third level, that moon can emerge into the world to hang in the sky!

“The missing middle levels are about summoning a sun....

“From what I can tell, the final three levels must be about bringing both the sun and the moon out into the open, and illuminating all creation with their brilliance!” Sighing, he set to work at cultivating the first level.

In terms of the life force he needed to work on his Undying Blood, now that he had such a high status in the sect, it was easier for him to request large amounts of plants and vegetation that had life force in them.

In fact, as a prime elder, he could set sect missions for apothecary cultivators in the sect to concoct medicine for him.

Although he happened to be of the opinion that the medicinal pills concocted by others would be of lower quality, after wrestling with the issue for a while, he sighed and made up his mind.

“I can’t do the concocting myself. Whenever I do that, accidents happen. Now that the demigod patriarch is my direct superior, it would be a big headache if I caused some disaster.” It was with a bit of regret that he decided to have lower-ranking disciples do the

concocting for him. One upside was that it led to large amounts of pills flowing in, and allowed him to advance by leaps and bounds with his Undying Blood.

His regret at not being able to personally make the pills could only be shoved down to the bottom of his heart.

In the blink of an eye, three months passed.

During that time, Bai Xiaochun focused only on cultivating his Undying Blood and the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation. As he did, he came to realize what it meant to occupy one of the highest positions in the sect, and have access to so many cultivation resources.

In fact, he used so many resources that, if he had been back in the River-Defying Sect, he would have bled them dry. To the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, though, such usage of resources was considered negligible.

After all, back before the Great Wall had collapsed, the resources required to man it had vastly surpassed anything that Bai Xiaochun could match. Even that level of expenditure had not been a problem for the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's reserves, which had been built up over tens upon tens of thousands of years.

Another thing Bai Xiaochun came to realize was that the four demigod heavenly kings in the Wildlands actually couldn't compare at all to the demigods in the riversource sects of the Heavenspan River region, at least in terms of wealth.

The resources at the disposal of the riversource sects vastly surpassed the heavenly kings. Of course, the Heavenspan River region wasn't without its weaknesses. There was something the Wildlands had that was sadly lacking the Heavenspan River.

And that was... fighting spirit and valiance!

In the Wildlands, soul cultivators lived hard and difficult lives. In contrast, the Heavenspan River cultivators were like flowers in a

greenhouse. Whether it was in terms of bravery or ambition, they didn't even come close to comparing to the Wildlanders.

Perhaps that was why the two sides had been at a deadlock for so long. Now that the Great Wall had fallen, it was difficult to say which side would have the advantage.

It was a big headache to consider the matter for even a short time. Therefore, he put it aside and focused on his cultivation.

Another thing that happened during the three months that passed was that his faction grew with shocking speed.

Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai had not wasted their years in the sect. Although they had conducted themselves with the utmost caution over the years, they had also worked hard to expand their network of contacts.

It didn't take long for them to gather a group of disciples who had previously never had a chance to rise to prominence. They were the ones who formed the backbone of Bai Xiaochun's faction now that he was a prime elder.

They even had nine Nascent Soul elders, one of them being Feng Youde.

There were even more Core Formation and Foundation Establishment cultivators, and overall, they formed a very powerful group. After all, Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai had gained a lot of experience back in Sky City, which they drew upon to grow their organization both quickly and with great strength.

Li Xiandao followed through with his promise of compensation. Originally, he had planned to keep things low key, but after finding out the truth of the matter, he realized that if he didn't act decisively, the truce he had worked out would crumble, and his relationship with Bai Xiaochun would be grievously damaged.

As a deva patriarch, he had many descendants, and therefore, he acted with brutal decisiveness. The first thing he did was deliver

up the head of the Nascent Soul elder who had been the primary culprit.

Then he crippled Li Yuansheng's cultivation base and locked him up in the very same prison where Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai had been held. Bai Xiaochun had no complaints about how the matter was handled, and Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai were both quite pleased.

After all was said and done, the relationship between Li Xiandao and Bai Xiaochun ended up relatively warm, and the friction from the matter of the River-Defying Sect was smoothed over.

At the same time, because of Bai Xiaochun's position, and the growth of his faction, there was no need for any requests or negotiations regarding his inn in Sky City. The Celestial Sky Society took the initiative to return it to him.

The Celestial Sky Society had the same boss as many years ago. Trembling with fear, he personally went to visit Bai Xiaochun to handle matters.

The man's heart was filled with endless sighs. Never could he have imagined that the same Bai Xiaochun with whom he had squabbled over resources in Sky City would, only a handful of decades later, become the sixth prime elder in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, a person of utmost power and authority.

Bai Xiaochun had an audience with the boss of the Celestial Sky Society, but didn't say much. After all, he had learned a lot from them. In fact, it was his experiences with the Celestial Sky Society that had enabled him to deal with the Nine Serenities King's heir apparent back in Arch-Emperor City. And it was by copying their tactics that he routed the two celestial necromancers who had plotted against him.

However, the fact that Bai Xiaochun didn't say much in the meeting caused the man's nervousness to mount, until he was soaked with sweat. Eventually, Xu Baocai gave him a good glare,

frightening the man so much that he offered even more copious gifts of compensation than he had initially intended to. At that point, Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai were finally pleased with the outcome.

More months passed.

Bai Xiaochun now had a very solid foundation in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and his faction was so big and powerful that people all over the Heavenspan River region had heard of them, including the other three riversource sects.

Rumors even began to spread in the Wildlands about the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's sixth deva, Bai Xiaochun. Many people gritted their teeth in frustration at how Bai Xiaochun seemed to move about so mysteriously. After all, he had roamed the Wildlands for many years, without a single person ever being able to track him down.

Only the most powerful elites in the Wildlands knew who Bai Xiaochun really was, and they were all shocked by the rumors. That was especially true of the Grand Heavenmaster, who was struck speechless by the intelligence reports from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

Back in Giant Ghost City, the Giant Ghost King heard the news, and muttered, "The little punk didn't even say goodbye to me when he left. Next time I see him, I'll definitely give him a good thrashing!"

Also in the Wildlands was an illusory river high in the sky, in the depths of which was a pitch-black palace. Bai Hao was there, clad in his imperial robes and wearing an imperial crown. Normally speaking, a cold expression covered his face. However, whenever he looked in the direction of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, his eyes shone with warmth and respect.

Chapter 908: He Left?

The vast resources available in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect allowed Bai Xiaochun's cultivation to advance smoothly and quickly. By the time he had been in secluded meditation for the better part of a year, the River-Defying Sect had united the Middle Reaches cultivation world.

Of course, the River-Defying Sect knew how to maintain propriety. They didn't exterminate the Starry, Polarity, and Dao River Courts. They kept them around, but in check. In fact, in addition to the yearly tribute given to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, those three sects also gave tribute to the River-Defying Sect.

Although Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian weren't happy about that, they had enough experience in life to know when to keep their heads down. They were fairly certain that they would have their chance at a comeback eventually, and besides, considering how young Bai Xiaochun was, it wasn't likely that he would stay in the sect for very long.

Bai Zhentian had remained in secluded meditation the entire time, whereas Li Xiandao had smoothed out his relationship with Bai Xiaochun, and therefore didn't feel the need to remain in seclusion. As for Chen Hetian, he had no choice but to leave the sect indefinitely.

From all of that, it was possible to see how much of a name Bai Xiaochun had made for himself in the battle for the River-Defying Sect.

He had almost unlimited resources at his disposal, and because of that, was initially excited to be able to work on his cultivation.

However, after some time passed, he started to get bored. Eventually, he began to go for walks in the sect, and yet, because of his high standing, people would only treat him with formal respect.

Although he enjoyed that type of thing, eventually, it started to get annoying.

“This is so boring! There’s nothing fun to do in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect at all.... The whole sect is so prissy and old-fashioned.... It was way better back in the Wildlands!” Sighing, he thought back to everything that had happened since he got back to the Heavenspan River region. Things had been interesting in the River-Defying Sect, but after returning to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, he realized that it really was a very humdrum place.

He thought about going to hassle Chen Hetian, but two things held him back. First of all, he lacked a good excuse. Second of all, and of even greater significance, was the fact that Chen Hetian had left the sect.

Bai Zhentian was next on his list, but apparently Bai Lin knew Bai Xiaochun too well. Sensing what was about to come, he hurried over to reminisce about old times, until eventually, their conversation ended with Bai Lin gazing at him with helpless anxiety.

By that point, Bai Xiaochun realized that he couldn’t go cause problems for Bai Zhentian.

That left only Li Xiandao. Unfortunately, Li Xiandao had been behaving himself perfectly.... He had compensated him for the matter with Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai, and that meant it would be very awkward to go bully him.

By this point, Bai Xiaochun was so depressed and bored that he felt like he was starting to grow mold.... At one point, he went out looking for some attractive female disciples, but the problem was that his status was too high, and he enjoyed carrying himself like someone from the senior generation. And for someone like that to try to seduce pretty female disciples didn’t seem very appropriate.

“Ai,” he sighed. “How come none of them will make the first move? Well, I can’t just sit around practicing cultivation all the

time. I'll end up cultivating myself into a moron." All of a sudden, he realized that, while he had missed the Heavenspan River region during his time in the Wildlands, now that he was back, he actually missed Arch-Emperor City.

Eventually, he came to the conclusion that he had nothing else to do other than work on cultivation. Unfortunately, he really was not happy using medicinal pills concocted by random disciples. And yet, he was still torn about whether or not to do his own medicine concocting.

"Don't tell me that a grand and mighty deva like myself will end up having to slink outside of the sect to concoct some pills...." He sighed again. "No. I have to concoct some pills of my own. If worst comes to worst, I'll just have to be extra careful...."

"In the past, people would always come to cause problems for me when I concocted medicine. But now I'm a prime elder! Chen Hetian ran away, Bai Zhentian is in secluded meditation, and Li Xiandao doesn't dare to cause problems for me.... My bro in the Hall of Steel Veins is on my side...."

"In the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, the only person who can tell me what to do is the demigod patriarch." The more he thought about it, the more antsy he got, until he finally made a decision.

"As long as I'm careful, everything should be fine." Encouraging himself in this way, he sent a list of required materials to the Internal Affairs Pavilion.

The list included medicinal ingredients and a large number of pill furnaces. Considering his standing in the sect, he had a sizable stipend that could get him things like this without having to provide compensation.

The staff at the Internal Affairs Pavilion immediately set to work filling the orders, sending large quantities of medicinal plants and pills to Bai Xiaochun. He was delighted to see the huge accumulation of resources, and quickly went into seclusion to start

working.

East Wind Life Force Pill!

Intoxication Life Force Pill!

Spirit Flower Life Force Pill!

Nine Transformations Life Force Pill!

He immediately began to think back to all of the medicine formulas he knew that related to life force. He tried out each formula, but the resulting pills all had the same problem. They simply didn't provide the level of life force that he needed. However, he was very pleased to discover that no accidents were happening. As a result, his confidence grew, and he began working, not just with one pill furnace, but ten. Then thirty. Then fifty....

All the successes got him feeling very excited, and also lucky.

"I guess that all the trials I went through in the Wildlands ended up pushing my Dao of medicine to a much higher level. Yeah, that must be the explanation!" Feeling prouder of himself than ever, he continued adding pill furnaces until he was working with eighty at the same time. Slowly but surely, he was immersing himself in his concocting efforts.

Perhaps his skill in the Dao of medicine really had improved. Or perhaps it was because he was worried about the demigod patriarch, and was thus being very careful. Either way, his concocting went very smoothly, and not a single accident occurred.

The worst things that happened were the occasional explosion, which would release some black smoke. There was also an occasional bout of lightning. However, considering the level of Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base, he was able to negate these effects easily.

Few disciples even noticed what was happening, and of those

who did, none dared to say anything....

A few months later, he was in the middle of a concocting session when a message came down from the demigod patriarch. It was actually a group message sent to all of the prime elders.

The patriarch explained that he had received a summons from the Celestial, and had to take a trip to Heavenspan Island. While he was gone, he was entrusting the safety of the sect to the devas.

It was something the other devas were used to. It was not a rare occurrence for the demigod patriarch to take a trip outside of the sect and leave them in charge.

However, this was Bai Xiaochun's first time experiencing such a thing. Although it was par for the course for the other devas, it was different for him. As soon as he heard the news, he gasped, and his heart started to race. He was so excited he almost jumped up into the air. He suddenly felt as if anything in the world was possible for him.

"The demigod patriarch... left?" For the first time... there was no one in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect who could tell him what to do!

"The demigod patriarch is gone...." He threw his head back and laughed uproariously. He had always been extremely careful when he went about concocting medicine. After all, there had been too many occasions when people chased him down angrily as a result of his work. The mere thought of what it was like trying to explain himself to an angry mob caused him to sigh incessantly.

But now... all obstacles had been cleared from his path. Furthermore, he had the strong feeling that things were going so well that no accidents could possibly happen.

"Concoct medicine. Concoct medicine! I'm going to concoct medicine to my heart's content!!

"I can finally perfect my Lightning Detox Grand Magic!

“I can refine my Aphrodisiac Pill. I can improve on my Fantasy Pill! And I can come up with some more mystery pills too!” Filled with excitement and anticipation, he jumped directly from eighty pill furnaces to three hundred!

Worried that it wasn't enough, he added several hundred more. Only when he had eight hundred pill furnaces going at the same time was he happy.

“I'm using my deva cultivation base to operate eight hundred furnaces at the same time! If word got out, people would admire me to no end!” He looked around proudly at all the pill furnaces, beneath which burned supreme-grade flamestones, causing ripples of heat to fill the air.

It was a sight that would surely strike fear into the hearts of anyone who saw it. After all, if eight hundred pill furnaces exploded simultaneously... then it would probably destroy most of the blue rainbow....

Chapter 909: Breakup Pill....

On the morning of the third day after the demigod patriarch left, a huge boom erupted from the blue rainbow, startling numerous disciples in the sect.

“What was that sound?!”

“Scared me half to death! What’s going on?!”

“Dammit! Who did that? I was in the middle of cultivation, and nearly experienced energy deviation!!” Countless angry curses filled the air, and dozens of cultivators actually flew up into the air angrily to determine what was happening.

However, when they realized that the noise came from the blue rainbow, their eyes went wide with shock, and they flew back down to where they came from....

The boom came when ten pill furnaces exploded, and startled Bai Xiaochun so badly that he immediately sent out some divine sense to see if anyone was going to come berate him. He even instinctively began to come up with an explanation.

However, after a long moment passed... the clamor in the sect died down.... Nobody came looking for him. The people who did fly up into the air only looked in his direction, then went back to where they had come from.

Only at that point did he finally realize what was happening.

“Hahaha! I was just being too jumpy, that’s all. I forgot that nobody in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect can tell me what to do!” Feeling quite emboldened, he went back to concocting medicine.

A few days later, another boom rocked the sect. To most disciples, an occasional explosion like that wasn’t anything to get upset about.

However, the booms continued every few days. On one particular

day, there were eight in a row. Soon, the disciples on the rainbow were starting to go crazy.

It only made sense for them to react in such a way. The sect was usually a quiet place, like a celestial paradise. But now, startling explosions were interrupting them all the time, making it almost impossible to focus on cultivation.

Normally speaking, a person in the sect who did such a thing would be attacked and likely killed. But... the noise was coming from the blue rainbow. Soon, people began to ask around, and found that Patriarch Bai was concocting medicine.

Therefore, nobody dared to complain openly.

If the only thing they had to deal with were booms, it might have been possible to get used to the situation. But two days later, smoke began to drift out, smoke that caused tears to well up in the eyes of everyone it touched.

“Agggghhhhhh! What kind of medicinal pill is Patriarch Bai concocting!?!?”

“No. No! I can’t take this!!”

It wasn’t just the ordinary disciples who were affected. Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian were included, and yet, neither of them dared to interfere.

If they couldn’t do anything about what was happening, then there was no need to even mention the lower-ranking disciples. All they could do was stare up resentfully at the blue rainbow.

Of course, Bai Xiaochun was too thoroughly engrossed in his work to have any idea that all of that was happening. His face was gaunt, but filled with excitement as he worked to make every type of pill he could think of that had something to do with life force. As he became more familiar with the various formulas, his skill in the Dao of medicine increased.

He made all varieties of pills, and eventually started to get bored

with life force pills. As his confidence grew, he came to the conclusion that he had turned over a new leaf in his pill concocting ability.

“I need to make... a treasured pill that can counteract the effects of the Aphrodisiac Pill!” He had already been ensnared twice with Aphrodisiac Pills, and although he had to admit that he had actually enjoyed the results, it was still quite a loss of face.

“Hmmmphh. How ridiculous that other people would use my own medicinal pill against me! That won’t do!

“I’m going to make a new pill that I’ll call the... Turn Off Pill!” The more he thought about it, the more pleased he was with the idea. Furthermore, the name of the pill couldn’t have been better.

“It’s definitely a good name!” Feeling supremely proud of himself, he started concocting!

“You know what’s a real turn off? Those uncaring fruits! They’re disgusting! Only by adding that type of fruit into the formula can I truly quench the fire which burns deep inside one’s heart!” Slowly but surely, a medicine formula was forming in his mind. After settling on an initial direction, he decided to run some tests. He started with thirty medicinal pills.

He was so engrossed in his work that he forgot to eat or sleep, and watched over the pill furnaces constantly for three whole days. Soon, the pills inside the furnaces were beginning to form. Unfortunately, just as the process seemed on the verge of concluding, one of the pill furnaces suddenly showed signs of instability.

Bai Xiaochun quickly placed sealing marks on it, only to find that a second, a third, and a fourth furnace were similarly destabilizing. Before he could do anything about it, all thirty pill furnaces were teetering on the verge of exploding!

“Not good!” Bai Xiaochun slapped down more sealing marks, and

sent his divine sense out to try to keep any danger to a minimum. Actually, because there was no one in the sect who could tell him what to do, he had kindly decided that, as a sect patriarch, he should manage himself.

However, when the pill furnaces exploded, a black smoke erupted out that not even he could control. It completely negated his divine sense! Thankfully, there wasn't much of the smoke, and all it did was cover part of the blue rainbow.

One of the affected areas, though, was where the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Superstars trials were held.... Quite a few disciples were there, and before any of them could react, the smoke had covered them.

Bai Xiaochun anxiously looked over to see what was going to happen. However, the smoke simply faded away, and the disciples looked around with quizzical expressions on their faces. As for Bai Xiaochun, he initially stared in shock, and then breathed a sigh of relief.

“Wait, nothing happened? Well, no harm no foul.” Rubbing his nose a bit, he continued to watch until he was sure nothing bad had resulted. Then he started thinking about why he might have failed, and decided to try a different approach, this time with a hundred pill furnaces.

Worried about the lower-ranking disciples who had been hit by the smoke, he sent his divine sense out and prepared to react protectively at the slightest sign of danger.

Three more days passed, and soon, the second batch of pills was nearing completion. Up to this point, no unusual behavior had cropped up among the disciples from earlier.

However, it was on the night of the third day that some strange things started to happen....

The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was a huge sect with many

disciples, so it was only natural for many of them to get together as Daoist partners. Among those disciples who had been at the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect trial, those who had no Daoist partners weren't affected at all, except that they were less interested in romantic relationships than before.

However, those who did have Daoist partners, whether they were men or women, found that, as the sun set on their immortal's caves....

“Junior Sister, we're just not suited for each other. From now on, you do your thing, and I'll do mine. Let's break up!”

“Elder Brother, why are there so many good-looking people in the world, but so few interesting souls? From now on, stay away from me!”

“I'm sorry, but we're just not meant for each other. My destiny is to pursue the great Dao! What's the point of romantic relationships? Don't even bring the subject up again!”

Quite a few people were taken aback by the breakup scenes going on. And of course, Bai Xiaochun noticed almost right away, and his heart began to pound.

“Wait a second, that's not right!” All of a sudden, he had a very bad feeling. After all, the primary ingredient in his Turn Off Pill was uncaring fruit. Using that in combination with some other medicinal plants he knew of, he had hoped to create a medicinal pill that would counteract the Aphrodisiac Pill. And Aphrodisiac Pills affected a person first physically, and then mentally.

Therefore, his plan for the Turn Off Pill had been to affect a person mentally first, and after that, to cleanse them physically. The current situation went totally beyond what he had imagined would happen.

And of course, it caused worry to gnaw at his heart.

“I wanted a Turn Off Pill, not a Breakup Pill.... I can't just let this

happen. I have to do something!” With that, he settled his mind. After all, considering that only a few people had been affected three days ago, the situation shouldn’t be very hard to remedy.

However, even as he made his decision about what to do, cracking sounds reached his ears, and his face fell as he looked at the one hundred pill furnaces, which had all reached the critical moment of the concocting process. Ten of those hundred pill furnaces had cracks spreading out over their surfaces.

“Noooo....” he screamed, rushing forward to try to contain the situation....

BOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Chapter 910: Must Concoct Antidote!

The pill furnaces exploded!

Not just a handful, but all one hundred of them, one after another in a rapid-fire chain reaction.

It happened in a single breath of time, and despite the fact that Bai Xiaochun had been prepared, he simply wasn't fast enough to contain the effects of a hundred pill furnaces all exploding at the same time! The force unleashed was shocking. Thankfully, he had his deva cultivation base, and very tough skin, otherwise... he would either have been killed, or at the least, badly injured.

"Noooo!" he screamed. His immortal's cave shook violently, and yet, that was not what worried Bai Xiaochun most. Most hair-raising was... the thick black smoke that blasted out at high speed in all directions.

The medicinal efficacy of this smoke vastly surpassed that of the previous smoke. Because of the deva power that Bai Xiaochun surrounded himself with, he was protected from its effects... but others nearby did not have that luxury.

As he let out a long cry of misery, the smoke covered the blue rainbow in its entirety. But things didn't end there. The smoke spread out toward the other rainbows, completely covering three of them before finally coming to a stop.

Bai Xiaochun's vision went dim, and his mind felt like it was being struck by heavenly lightning. He knew... that he had caused a major disaster.

"I'm finished. Kaput...." This was definitely not how he had envisioned things turning out, and it felt very unfair. Why did he, an awesome apothecary with incredible skill in the Dao of medicine, always cause strange things like this to happen?

Meanwhile, the disciples who were on the three affected

rainbows stared around in shock. Some reacted quickly enough to speed away in the face of the black smoke, but others were inundated.

“Dammit, what is this stuff?!?!”

“Smoke? Heavens! How could there be toxic smoke inside the sect?!?!”

“Wait, are we under attack?!?”

The three rainbows instantly devolved into chaos. Li Xiandao, Bai Zhentian, and Patriarch Steel Veins were all shocked, and rushed out to provide aid. When they saw how three of the other rainbows were covered in the smoke, their hearts were gripped with madness.

Thankfully, the smoke went away rather quickly. The entire thing only lasted for a bit more than ten breaths of time. Then, everything went back to normal.

It was only at that point that people realized that the sound of the explosion had come from the blue rainbow.

“Elder Bai is definitely concocting medicine again!!”

“Heavens! When is this going to end? Elder Bai isn't concocting medicine, is he? He's trying to destroy the entire sect!”

It only took moments for countless angry gazes to fall onto the blue rainbow. “Can't anyone stop him? If things keep going on like this, what are we supposed to do?!”

However, there was nothing more that they could do than glare. Any other person, even a Nascent Soul expert, would already have been surrounded and attacked, but Bai Xiaochun's status in the sect was too high. After all... he was a deva, and one of only six prime elders, a fact which filled the hearts of all disciples with fear.

Li Xiandao hesitated about what to do, and finally decided to do nothing. Bai Zhentian reacted similarly. However, Patriarch Steel

Veins smiled wryly, and then sent Bai Xiaochun a message of inquiry.

Bai Xiaochun replied immediately. “This was the last time. I guarantee it!”

Deeply worried, he did his best to explain the matter, and then sank down into thought.

Although no one else had any clue at the moment, he was very well aware that, despite the fact that the smoke had dissipated without seeming to affect anyone, it would be, at most, three days... until the effects were seen. At that point, tens of thousands of disciples... would all break up with their Daoist partners.

Bai Xiaochun knew that a disaster like that was simply too much.

“People say that if you break up someone’s relationship, you shorten their lifespan. Heavens! I might have just ruined the relationships of tens of thousands of disciples.... If I don't fix this, nobody in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect will be able to get a Daoist partner.... This generation of the cultivation world will be significantly harmed. And it will all be my fault!”

That thought made Bai Xiaochun feel like his head was about to explode. Scowling on the verge of tears, he gritted his teeth and murmured, “No! I can’t let that happen. I have to concoct an antidote!”

He took a few deep breaths, and then nervously pulled out some more medicinal plants. His goal: create a medicinal pill that could dispel the effects of the uncaring fruit.

“I didn’t want this to happen!” he grumbled guiltily. “I was just trying to concoct that Turn Off Pill....” He suddenly realized that not having someone around to tell him what to do wasn’t that good of a thing after all....

Although his position in the sect ensured that no disciples would curse or attack him, he still felt bad. In fact, it had actually been

better back when people did come after him.

Besides, he didn't even want to think about what would happen if the demigod patriarch happened to come back right now.... Shivering, he headed back into his private chamber to start working on a new pill formula.

One day. Two days. Three days.... On the afternoon of the third day, only about six hours before the uncaring fruit's effects would begin to manifest, Bai Xiaochun leaped up, hair disheveled, and eyes flashing with madness. Staring at the jade slip he held in his hand, he cried, "I did it! I created the antidote formula!!"

He threw his head back and laughed uproariously.

"Fear not, Fellow Daoists of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. I am here to save you!" With that, he ignored his exhaustion and set to work concocting the medicine.

In order to maximize the chances of succeeding, he used three hundred pill furnaces. He was putting everything on the line in the hopes of negating the effects of the uncaring fruit.

As time passed, he concentrated fully on the three hundred pill furnaces. None of them showed any signs of exploding, and whenever the slightest irregularity cropped up, he would make adjustments immediately. Finally, when there was only one hour left until the effects of the uncaring fruit manifested, the three hundred pill furnaces turned bright red, and sent a pungent odor out in all directions.

When Bai Xiaochun detected that odor, he finally relaxed a bit.

"Excellent. In order to negate the effects of the uncaring fruit, I added in black crabapple, which can affect all sorts of various human emotions and desires. By combining those effects with certain other types of plants and vegetation, I can definitely negate the uncaring fruit!" Although he was excited, he hesitated for a moment. According to his calculations, the effects of the uncaring

fruit would begin to manifest at any moment. One last time, he sent his divine sense out through the sect, and could already see some disciples heading toward their Daoist partners with somber expressions on their faces....

There was no time to waste, and neither was there time to hand out pills one by one. Eyes burning with determination, he waved his hand out in front of him.

Immense force erupted out and landed on the three hundred pill furnaces... which exploded, resulting in a thunderous boom that vastly surpassed any of the previous explosions. At the same time, a massive shockwave spread out in all directions!

Everyone in the entire Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect heard the deafening boom, and many felt their cultivation bases destabilizing as a result. Quite a few were even struck senseless.

“Heavens! Don’t tell me Elder Bai is concocting medicine again!?!?”

“I can’t hear anything! Did you just say something?”

“I’m gonna go crazy!!”

As the cries of surprise and alarm rose up, the blue rainbow shook violently. Worse, a massive wave of black smoke rushed out from Bai Xiaochun’s immortal's cave!!

This time, even the violet rainbow, where the demigod patriarch lived, was affected. Everything was covered with black smoke!

The entire Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was enveloped in blackness, striking shock and fear into the hearts of all present.

“Heavens! What... what kind of smoke is this!?!?”

“Where did you guys go? I can’t see anything....”

“Run! This smoke is so acrid, it must be poison! Aggghhhh!!”

Chapter 911: Doubts!

The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had been plunged into chaos. Thankfully, the black smoke only affected the rainbow, and not the cities on the ground. The sudden sharp contrast between the two areas caused the disciples down below to stare up in complete astonishment.

As of this moment, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect seemed to be covered with an obscuring darkness filled with cries and shouts of alarm.

The disciples down below were left feeling very unsettled.

“What’s.... that?”

“Heavens! What divine ability is that?!?!”

The crowds in the four big cities down below were all gasping in shock. However, there were a few hundred people in Sky City who were frightened, but at the same time, rejoicing. They even began to express their gratitude verbally to two other disciples who stood in their midst. Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai.

“Brother Zhang, I have only you to thank for this. You have my complete and utter gratitude!”

“Brother Baocai, words can't express how thankful I am. If you ever have any problems in the future, come look for me, and I'll be sure to find a way to repay you!”

Xu Baocai and Big Fatty Zhang were trembling in fear just like everyone else was. They knew Bai Xiaochun far too well, and when they had learned earlier that he was concocting medicine, they had immediately fled in fear. After all, when Bai Xiaochun made up his mind, it was impossible to dissuade him, and therefore, the best option was to just leave.

Neither of them had felt that staying on the rainbow was safe, and therefore, they had gritted their teeth and gone all the way

down to Sky City. Only then did they finally feel safe.

Of course, they couldn't bear to leave all of the people they had recruited into their faction behind, and had therefore sent messages warning them that something big was about to happen, and that the safest thing was to temporarily move down to Sky City.

Some had assumed that they were making a mountain out of a molehill, and had ignored them.... Others had been a bit hesitant, but still came down anyway.

After seeing the black smoke completely covering the rainbow structure, the group who had heeded the warnings couldn't help but rejoice at their good fortune.

"We're all bros here," Big Fatty Zhang said, his face still pale from fear, "so don't even mention it. Like I told you before, when Elder Bai concocts medicine, even gods and ghosts will run for cover!"

Xu Baocai took a deep breath, frowned in concentration, and then said, "Furthermore, you listen to me. Based on what I know about Elder Bai, and the things I've experienced... I can tell you that things aren't over yet. You absolutely, positively must not go back up there yet!"

Back up on the rainbow, the disciples were all descending into madness. As for Bai Xiaochun, he flew up to hover in the air above the blue rainbow, where he looked around anxiously at all the black smoke.

"I'm a deva, whose will can surpass that of the heavens. And yet I can't do anything about the smoke from some exploding pill furnaces.... Something seems off about this!" He really couldn't stop wondering about the whole thing. He had been working very hard to control the situation, and yet had been powerless against the smoke.

“You know, it's been like that ever since I started this concocting session.... I'm a deva, and yet I haven't been in control at all. It doesn't make sense. Even if something unexpected occurred, I should have been able to prevent anything bad from happening. And yet... the bad stuff just keeps happening.” He couldn't come up with any answers, something that he found hard to accept.

“And that's not even mentioning the fact that my skill in the Dao of medicine has improved a lot....” There was no answer. It was just like how [the Will he had begun to develop in the Gold Core stage](#) had vanished without a trace when he formed his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul.... There was absolutely no explanation he could think of.

“Ah, whatever. I caused the problem, but I fixed it. I guess I should be happy.” With his divine sense, he could confirm that all of the disciples who had been affected by the uncaring fruit were showing no symptoms at all thanks to the black smoke.

As for any disciples who had not absorbed any of the aura of the uncaring fruit, he had planned for that as well, and made sure that they wouldn't even feel the slightest discomfort.

“That black smoke doesn't have even an ounce of poison in it!” As the smoke began to dissipate, a smile broke out on Bai Xiaochun's face. He had already decided that, for as long as he couldn't identify the source of the problem and fix it, he wouldn't concoct any more medicine.

It was around this time that three beams of light suddenly shot through the air toward Bai Xiaochun. They were none other than Li Xiandao, Bai Zhentian, and the deva patriarch from the Hall of Steel Veins.

Li Xiandao and Bai Zhentian both had very grim expressions on their faces. Originally, they hadn't planned to interfere at all, but the matter had reached the point of affecting the entire sect, leaving them no other choice. As for Patriarch Steel Veins, he had a

relatively good relationship with Bai Xiaochun, and yet, still had a wry smile on his face as he approached.

“Bai, old pal, didn’t you say there wouldn’t be another time...?”

Now that the danger had passed, Bai Xiaochun once again bore the demeanor of a deva as he replied, “I’m really sorry, my friend. You see, last time there was an accident that infected some of the disciples with a dangerous substance. Because I was so worried about that, I intentionally sent this smoke out to deliver the antidote to them. If you don’t believe me, just watch. None of the people who the smoke touched will even get uncomfortable.”

Smiling faintly, he gestured out at the crowds below.

The three other devas looked down, and immediately saw that Bai Xiaochun was telling the truth. Although most of the disciples were muttering curses and complaints, none of them seemed harmed in the least.

The three devas breathed sighs of relief. After all, if some problems had occurred, then all of them would have been in trouble when the demigod patriarch returned.

“Don’t worry. See? The smoke is vanishing. If you’re still worried, then just relax here for the time it takes an incense stick to burn. Afterward, the entire sect will be completely back to normal!” Apparently, Bai Xiaochun had prepared for a situation like this in advance; he waved his sleeve, summoning a tea table, as well as an incense stick. Sitting down, he gestured for the other devas to join him.

Bai Zhentian was hesitant, but Li Xiandao and Patriarch Steel Veins sat down and began to chat. Seeing that, Bai Zhentian steeled himself and also sat down.

Patriarch Steel Veins was a fellow prime elder, and had helped Bai Xiaochun back in the River-Defying Sect. Therefore, the two of them were actually rather close, so it was only natural that he

wanted to make sure the incident with the smoke was smoothed out. “Bai, old pal, your Dao of medicine is shocking. You’ve really shown me a new world today!”

Feeling a bit guilty, Bai Xiaochun gave a dry laugh and said, “Oh, I’m just an amateur. My skill isn’t even worth mentioning.”

Li Xiandao chuckled and said, “Amateur? Are you kidding? You’re so skilled you can transform the Dao of medicine itself! Brother Bai, you really are incredible.”

Bai Zhentian was the only one who didn't say anything. As the group chatted, the incense stick continued to burn down until only about a third of it was left....

By now, much of the smoke had dissipated, revealing the buildings and cultivators beneath. It was at this point that Bai Xiaochun’s expression flickered; something seemed off. Unable to believe what he was seeing, he rubbed his eyes vigorously and then looked around again.

He wasn’t the only one to react in such a way. The other three devas all stared blankly at the areas being revealed by the dissipating smoke.

Although there was almost no smoke left at all.... The blue rainbow... from top to bottom, was now... black!

Beads of sweat popped out on Bai Xiaochun’s head, and the other devas gasped.

“Calm down. There’s no need to get antsy here. We still have some time left. Trust me, everything will be fine.” In no mood to drink tea, Bai Xiaochun rose to his feet, trembling. The smoke continued to dissipate, and as it did, the seven rainbows, which had all been very colorful in the past.... were now completely black. Bai Xiaochun’s mind began to reel.

Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Cyan, Blue, Violet.... Before, the seven rainbows that made up the rainbow structure had been

seven colors.... But now, they were completely black, buildings and all.... The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was now as black as night!

It was around this time that the disciples began to notice that they were standing on black ground. Jaws dropped, and cries of alarm filled the air.

“Why... why is it black?!?!”

“Heavens! This is supposed to be a rainbow! Where did the color go?!”

“Don’t tell me it got poisoned!!”

“Something big is about to happen!!!”

The part about Willpower and the Gold Core stage came up in chapter 505. Don’t worry, this Willpower thing has not been forgotten. And I want to take this opportunity to point out that Will with a capital W is different from the ordinary 'will' that you hear a lot regarding the will of the heavens and the will of devas. In Chinese, they are two different characters with basically the same general meaning. Uniquely in AWE, they are being used as separate things.

Chapter 912: Everyone Moves

A cacophony of voices thundered out to fill the rainbow structure. After all, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had existed for countless years, with the seven rainbows being its identifying standard.

Not only was that rainbow structure famous in the eastern Heavenspan River, but it was also praised by the other three riversource sects.

In terms of beauty and splendor, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect took first place among all the branches of the river, which was a major source of pride to the demigod patriarch and ordinary disciples alike.

But now... the seven-colored rainbow structure was completely black. Even the buildings which covered its surface were pitch black, driving the disciples into near madness.

“Our rainbow!!”

“Is this still our sect?!?!”

“The rainbow!”

“Calm down everyone. We need to get out of here right now! Can’t you tell that the rainbow has been poisoned!? I have the feeling that if we don’t escape immediately, we’re all dead!”

Down below, the cultivators in the four cities gasped, expressions of astonishment covering their faces as they looked up.

“Heavens! Who would have thought that it would be so terrifying for Elder Bai to concoct medicine!!”

“How did he do it?! I’ve never heard of pill concocting sessions going like this!!”

“The rainbow... is black now....”

Big Fatty Zhang and Xu Baocai exchanged stunned glances.

Although they had more experience in this regard than anyone, and had assumed earlier that the true disaster was yet to come, even they were nearly struck mute by what they were seeing.

They swallowed hard, their hearts racing madly as they stared at the pitch-black rainbow. The other cultivators who were with them were equally shocked.

About this time, the cultivators who were on the rainbow itself exploded into action like a hive of wasps. Shouting and clamoring, they raced off of the rainbow structure with all the speed they could muster.

They were absolutely terrified by the thought of Bai Xiaochun concocting medicine, and were convinced that the best thing to do was just move away....

From top to bottom, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's rainbow began to empty out. Those who couldn't fly fast enough used secret magics to get away as quickly as they could.

From the day the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had been founded until now, nothing like this had ever happened before....

Before long, all seven rainbows were completely and utterly empty....

Back on the previously blue rainbow, Bai Xiaochun stood there, his jaw hanging open, trembling as he looked around at what was happening. And of course, his anxiety continued to build.

“Why is this happening? Dammit! I did everything to make sure no accidents happened! Something fishy is going on. Something very fishy!!” Terror and madness rising in his heart, he looked over at the Patriarch Steel Veins, a bitter smile on his face. “Fellow Daoists, you were here to see it all, right? I was fixing my previous mistake! I didn't want to change the rainbows' color....”

The other three prime elders were stunned into silence at the moment. Their eyes were blank, and they were so taken aback that

they had no idea what to do.

It was around this time that transmission jade slips began to buzz in all three of their bags of holding. When they scanned them with divine sense, they immediately heard pleas of help coming from their fellow clan members.

“Patriarch, everyone else is evacuating the rainbow. We need to leave too!!”

“We can’t stay here, Patriarch. It’s too dangerous!!”

“Patriarch, Elder Bai is terrifying when he concocts medicine. Let’s get out of here.... If we don’t leave now, we might get destroyed along with the rainbow....”

When Bai Zhentian heard the messages from his clan members, he didn’t say a single word. He just took a step forward and vanished. After arriving at his clan, he gathered up all the cultivators and left....

Although he was fairly certain the black rainbow hadn’t actually been poisoned, he was still fearful of Bai Xiaochun’s concocting methods. And since he couldn’t do anything about it at the moment, he had no choice but to care for his clan members.

Bai Zhentian truly couldn’t have been more shaken. “This Bai Xiaochun’s pill concocting is even more terrifying than his battle prowess....”

He had already decided that if it came down to it, he would rather die fighting Bai Xiaochun in battle than allow him to concoct medicine outside of his front gate....

“Dammit, I can’t believe a walking disaster like this has lived long enough to become a deva!” Wrapped up in depressed thoughts, Bai Zhentian hurried away as quickly as possible.

Li Xiandao was essentially thinking the same thing as Bai Zhentian. The only difference was that he was more profoundly afraid. He had the feeling that if Bai Xiaochun were given enough

time, and the right circumstances, then he... could actually destroy the entire Heavenspan Realm.

“It’s a good thing that when he came to cause trouble, he just beat me up, and didn’t decide to concoct medicine instead....” Heart pounding with lingering fear, Li Xiandao quickly turned to say one last thing to Bai Xiaochun.

“Um... Fellow Daoist Bai, I have an errand to run, see you later!” With that, he turned and blurred into motion to begin moving his clan away.

By now, the only person left was Patriarch Steel Veins, toward whom Bai Xiaochun stared, nearly on the verge of tears.

Patriarch Steel Veins was inwardly cursing Bai Zhentian and Li Xiandao for fleeing with such haste. Smiling wryly, he looked back at Bai Xiaochun and said, “Bai, old pal, there’s really nothing I can do about the situation. You... um, take care of yourself. I think... the demigod patriarch should be back in four or five days at the most.”

With that, he hurried away to move the Hall of Steel Veins off the rainbow.

Soon, the previously bustling rainbow only had one person left on it. Bai Xiaochun.

“I just wanted to concoct a Turn Off Pill.... I never thought it would end up like this.... I know it’s my fault....” As he stood there looking around with a weepy scowl, he found that he couldn’t calm down. It was just like the old saying went: his heart was beating like fifteen buckets in a well--eight going down while seven were coming up. Earlier, he had thought it was great that no one came after him with violent intentions because of his pill concocting. But now that he was all alone, he suddenly felt guilty.

“The demigod patriarch will be back in four or five days....” The mere thought of how the patriarch would react left Bai Xiaochun

shaking in terror.

“Will he end up regretting what he's done for me...?” The mere thought caused his face to drain with blood. A moment later, he was rushing back toward his immortal's cave.

“No! I still have four or five days. I can still fix the problem!! I can do it! I can definitely get the colors back into the rainbow!”

The total population of the four cities skyrocketed in the briefest of moments. At the same time, numerous bitter gazes were directed at the black rainbow up above.

“Good. Let Elder Bai stay up there by himself....”

“But when will it end? We can't live down here forever!”

“What do we do now? Even the other prime elders have moved down into the cities! From that, you can see how terrifying Elder Bai's medicinal pills are!”

“Let's hope things wrap up soon. If things go on like this, Elder Bai is going to run the sect completely into the ground....”

The next day, Bai Xiaochun burst out from his immortal's cave. He looked gaunt, with his hair in disarray, and his clothes in tatters.

“I figured it out,” he muttered. “When black crabapple gets mixed with miluo wood, it creates a unique sediment.... That's what made the rainbow change color. Dammit. I did plenty of research ahead of time and never heard anything about that sediment. Why did it pop up after I started concocting...? Getting rid of it won't be easy, but I should be able to come up with a way!”

“If I use the pollen of spiritpure daisy toward the end of the concocting process, I can drive out the black color. If I bolster the effect with my cultivation base power, then it should do the trick!”

His excitement surged as he was convinced that he had come up with a solution to the problem. But he quickly suppressed his

excitement. Worried that he might end up causing yet another problem, he quickly concocted a single batch and then performed some tests. Afterward, when he was sure that there would be no side-effects, he excitedly set to work on a larger batch.

At first, he planned to take things slow and steady. He did some quick calculations, and came to the conclusion that it would take three days to finish the job of cleansing the rainbow.

And that was when he got a message from the Hall of Steel Veins. The demigod patriarch... would be back in only two hours....

As soon as he heard that news, he felt like he was about to explode.

“I have to put everything on the line!!” He pulled out all of the pill furnaces he had left, and even personally went to the Internal Affairs Pavilion. There wasn’t anyone on duty, but as a prime elder, he could easily unlock the storage warehouse and take out more than a thousand new pill furnaces!

In addition to the several hundred he already had, it was a total of about 1,500 furnaces. He quickly set them all up in the courtyard of his residence, and then went about madly concocting... 1,500 batches of pills made from spiritpure daisy pollen!

Because time was limited, he pushed the concocting process along with his cultivation base. In the end... when about two hours had passed, all 1,500 pill furnaces had turned bright red.

“It worked!” He knew that time was running out, so he threw his hands out in front of him, sending a blast of cultivation base power into the furnaces and causing them all to explode!

The resulting explosion, bolstered by his cultivation base, caused the seven rainbows to return to their previous color!

It was at that exact same moment that the pressure of a demigod began to weigh down on the area.

Chapter 913: The Demigod Returns

Moments before....

The demigod patriarch of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was a tall, thin man with long, steel-gray hair. He wore a white robe, and while handsome, currently flew along with a completely expressionless face. Furthermore, a glint of anxiety was just barely visible deep in his eyes.

Apparently, he was somewhat unsettled by whatever it was he had learned on his most recent trip to Heavenspan Island.

Although he was currently still above the Heavenspan Sea, he could clearly see the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect off in the distance.

Every time he left the sect and then came back, he liked to spend a bit of time marveling at the seven scintillating rainbows that made up the sect.

This time, though, when he finally caught sight of the sect up ahead, his jaw dropped, and he stopped flying.

No longer did he see seven dazzling rainbows. Instead, he saw seven black, shadowy objects floating on the horizon. In fact, his first reaction was to mistakenly think that he had gone to the wrong sect.

And yet, before he could even react, an intense boom echoed out from what had once been the blue rainbow. The sky trembled as if from thunder, and a huge wave began to roll out across the Heavenspan Sea and River!

The demigod patriarch's face fell, and he took a step forward, placing him right above the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

**

Mere moments had passed since Bai Xiaochun had let out a

powerful shout as more than a thousand pill furnaces exploded, sending a blast of pollen out in all directions.

Almost immediately, color had begun to spread out across what had once been the blue rainbow. A look of joy had erupted on Bai Xiaochun's face, but as of this moment, he went deathly pale.

“Not again....” Perhaps it was because of how many pill furnaces had exploded on the rainbow recently, weakening it, or some other reason. In any case, the explosion of this latest group of 1,500 pill furnaces, along with the influx of power from Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base, was simply too much for the rainbow to take.

Even as the shockwave of the initial blast still continued to echo out, the rainbow... began to crumble!

From a distance, it was possible to see a huge crater open up, into which tumbled the structures which had existed on top of it moments before. As that happened, the demigod patriarch up above, and the countless cultivators down below, all stared in mute shock....

The crater widened into a hole, consuming even Bai Xiaochun's immortal's cave....

Meanwhile, rumbling sounds continued to echo out as the incredible power of the pollen cleansed the other parts of the rainbow, and restored their color.

However, all the disciples in the four cities could look at was the rubble of the immortal's cave falling down through the enormous hole which had been punched in the blue rainbow. As for Bai Xiaochun, he hovered there watching the same thing happen, trembling in fear....

Soon, the shocked silence in the cities gave way to a huge commotion.

“It... it collapsed?”

“Dammit, how did he restore the colors? Hmph! Like I said from

the beginning, the River-Defying Sect is nothing but a backwater sect. This Bai Xiaochun isn't one of us! This was actually a good chance to see him punished. How the hell did the bastard manage to turn things around at the last minute?"

"What right do these River-Defying Sect interlopers have to run amok in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!? Bai Xiaochun got lucky, that's the only way he became a deva. If he kept his head down it would be one thing, but look how brazen he is! He completely looks down on our Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect! We definitely need to join forces and submit an official request to the court to have his cultivation base crippled!" When the demigod was gone, no one would have dared to say such things aloud. But now, they couldn't hold back any longer.

Bai Zhentian, Li Xiandao, and Patriarch Steel Veins all had varying expressions on their faces. They could sense that the demigod patriarch was back, and after exchanging nervous glances, they flew up into the air together.

At that point, a voice erupted that caused the sky to turn dim, and the lands to quake.

"What are you doing, Bai Xiaochun?!?! Do you have a death wish or something?!"

Bai Xiaochun currently hovered at the edge of the 300-meter wide hole in the blue rainbow, looking down at the lands on the other side. Profound anxiety currently gripped his heart, and his mind raced as he scrambled to come up with an explanation.

Thankfully, the pollen had the desired effect of cleansing the rainbow, and by now, the seven colors of the seven rainbows had been restored. Furthermore, the disciples who had been previously affected by the smoke from his medicine concocting were now coming to realize that their cultivation bases had actually been refined because of the torment they had been through.

Bai Xiaochun realized that too, and it alleviated a bit of his guilt.

However, before he could say anything in his defense, the gaze of the demigod patriarch fell upon him, as sharp as the sharpest sword. Clearly, the man was furious beyond belief.

As the demigod's divine sense continued to spread out, and he heard all the things the disciples down below were saying, he came to realize what had occurred while he was away.

He also realized almost immediately that all seven of the rainbows were completely unoccupied, and that everyone had moved down into the cities below.

He almost couldn't believe that Bai Xiaochun's pill concocting could be so powerful and dangerous. But then he looked at the gaping hole in the blue rainbow, and his fury spiked.

"Cat got your tongue?!" he yelled in a voice that rumbled like thunder. He emphasized his words with a flick of his sleeve, which caused the seven rainbows to tremble, and left the disciples down below shivering with both fear and anticipation.

The other devas hesitated for a moment, with both Bai Zhentian and Li Xiandao thinking back to how, considering the disasters Bai Xiaochun had caused, it might be a good time to hit him while he was down.

Patriarch Steel Veins also held back, trying to decide whether or not to try to help Bai Xiaochun explain himself. But then he looked at the gigantic hole in the rainbow, and merely smiled bitterly.

Bai Xiaochun's heart pounded as he looked back at the furious demigod patriarch. Steeling himself, he prepared his reply.

"Hey, Patriarch. I, um... well this is what happened: I didn't really like my old immortal's cave. Yeah. That's what caused this!

"My old immortal's cave wasn't a very good place to stand guard over our Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Therefore, I decided to tear it down completely and replace it with this hole. This way, I can look up at the violet rainbow to bask upon your glory, sir, but at

the same time, can look down to the four cities down below. Now, I can keep track of everything that goes on in the entire sect!

“Only by doing this can I truly feel at ease, and it goes to show that in my heart, I care only about the patriarch up above, and the disciples down below. My entire being is devoted to our Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!”

Although he had started out somewhat haltingly, as the words came out, he spoke more confidently, even thumping himself on the chest to emphasize his words. It really seemed like he would spare no effort to work hard for the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

When the disciples in the four cities hear his words, they immediately erupted in anger....

“Shameless!!”

“Completely incorrigible!!”

“He obviously wants to destroy our entire sect! It's a crime deserving of ten thousand deaths!”

The lower-ranking disciples weren't the only ones to react in such a way. The other three devas had strange expressions on their faces. However, the demigod patriarch actually seemed amused. He considered providing a harsh reprimand, but then he thought back to his trip to Heavenspan Island, and how Du Lingfei had once again reminded him to care for Bai Xiaochun.

That reinforced his impression that the two of them had a special relationship, and it caused him to hesitate over how to resolve the current situation.

After a moment passed, he snorted and said, “If you ever think of concocting medicine inside the sect again... I'll personally make you wish you hadn't!”

With that, he swished his sleeve and turned to leave.

When Bai Zhentian and Li Xiandao saw the demigod patriarch

turn what everyone had expected to be a high crime with a severe punishment into a minor offense, they gasped in shock.

Patriarch Steel Veins was also taken aback.

Even Bai Xiaochun was stunned. Never could he have guessed that the demigod patriarch would say something like that, and in fact, not even ask any questions about what had happened. His heart began to race at the improbability of it all. Then he started wondering if, perhaps, the patriarch was doing it all because of his potential for future growth....

The disciples down below were flabbergasted.

When the demigod patriarch noticed how people were reacting, he realized that he might have let Bai Xiaochun off a bit too lightly. Looking back at him with a glare, he said, “Since you like this hole of an immortal's cave, then go ahead and keep living inside of it!”

With that, he headed back up to the violet rainbow.

Bai Xiaochun looked at the gaping hole, and his face fell. He had originally assumed he would be getting off scot-free. Instead, it turned out his punishment was to live inside of a big hole....

“Ah, whatever. This really was my fault, so I’ll just grin and bear it....” Bai Xiaochun had been so nervous because of the demigod patriarch that he didn’t notice at all how angry everyone was down below.

As for the other devas, they couldn’t help but look at Bai Xiaochun a bit more closely. Based on what they knew of the demigod patriarch, they were sure that if any of them had done something like what Bai Xiaochun had just done, they would have faced severe punishments.

And yet, with Bai Xiaochun, he played everything down.... That led all three of them to the conclusion that Bai Xiaochun had some mysterious and unprecedented backers!

The disciples down below were all crestfallen. They had been

itching to see Bai Xiaochun struck with bad luck, and some had even hoped he would be killed.

However, in the end, most people realized that no one had actually been hurt. The truth was that Bai Xiaochun, originally a nobody from the River-Defying Sect, had truly risen to prominence in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. That became the source of quite a bit of jealousy.

Chapter 914: The Unpredictable Human Heart

Now that the demigod patriarch was back, the disciples of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect began to make their way back from the four cities and onto the rainbows again.

After being cleansed with pollen, the rainbows' color had been restored. However, the enormous hole remained in the blue rainbow. In fact, anyone who looked up at that hole would be able to see Bai Xiaochun inside of it....

Bai Xiaochun felt like leaving, but every time he was about to, a terrifying stream of divine sense would descend from the violet rainbow, forcing him to bow his head and remain in place, floating there cross-legged....

"If I'd known things would end up like this, I would have said I was planning to rebuild the immortal's cave instead of talking about how much I cared about the sect." He sighed. Being forced to live like this was just as bad as being strung up in front of the entire sect. It was very embarrassing.

"At least the color came back to the rainbows, and none of the disciples were hurt...." When he contemplated those things, his guilt lessened a bit.

To Bai Xiaochun, it was a big loss of face. However, that was only because he didn't know the demigod patriarch very well. The truth was that the man was extremely cruel and strict. Everyone who had ever had dealings with him had been under the impression that he would dole out severe sanctions!

"That's no punishment! That's not even a slap on the wrist.... It's clearly someone from the senior generation favoring someone from the junior generation!"

"Why does Bai Xiaochun get this kind of treatment?! He's not

even one of us! It would be one thing if he kept a low profile in the sect, but instead, he does the opposite!”

“What a pity. Even after all that, he didn’t get killed. You know, I never really liked the River-Defying Sect. What gave them the right to rise to prominence? And what gave this Bai Xiaochun the right to do what he did? Hmph! They’re nothing but country bumpkins. Even the lowest person in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect is better than them!”

Talk like this had been spreading secretly from the moment Bai Xiaochun was appointed as a prime elder. The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was a riversource sect, and its disciples were a very proud lot. They always looked down on the sects from downriver, and viewed them as little more than rustic villagers. Therefore, it was only natural that Bai Xiaochun’s rise to prominence would lead to some jealousy.

Before, no one had ever dared to speak such things in the open. But after he started concocting medicine, they simply couldn’t keep their feelings inside anymore. In fact, they were so upset that they didn’t even consider the fact that the pill concocting didn’t actually harm them.

Now, new jealousies and grievances were piled onto the old. Soon, word about how everyone hated this ‘country bumpkin’ reached Bai Xiaochun himself, leaving him feeling both bitter and stunned.

“I guess there was no need to be so worried about them!” he thought. Yet again, he was reminded that the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was not his home. No, he only had one home. The River-Defying Sect!

However, before the gossip could intensify too much, new news was broken, something that deeply shocked everyone.

The Celestial... was taking in a new apprentice!!

The news spread like wildfire, especially on the rainbows of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. At the same time, the enormous battleship on the Heavenspan Sea began to rumble with noise, causing the talk to spread even faster.

Bai Xiaochun was actually the first to notice the noise coming from the battleship. Shocked, he sent some divine sense out, and could immediately sense that the huge thing was powering up by sucking in the energy of heaven and earth in the area.

Back when his cultivation base was lower, he would never have been able to detect such a thing. But now that he was a deva, he picked up on the clues immediately. The battleship was clearly some ancient magical device that could operate only by absorbing large amounts of spiritual power from the surrounding sea water.

However, it needed a bit of time to power up. From what he could tell, it would be several days before it could set sail.

“The Celestial is accepting a new apprentice?” he murmured, eyes narrowing. “And the battleship is powering up?”

This was not his first time hearing the rumors about the Celestial taking in a new apprentice. Patriarch Spirit Stream had mentioned something similar, and in fact, that was one of the reasons Bai Xiaochun had returned to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to begin with.

“Isn’t the Celestial doing fine as it is? What does he need a new apprentice for?” Bai Xiaochun already found the thing suspicious. Three days later, the noise from the battleship ceased, and fluctuations began to roll out from it, indicating that it could set sail at any time.

Around that time, cultivators began to arrive from the Middle Reaches and Lower Reaches. Even delta cultivators came.

All of them acted very cautiously, and none dared to enter the sect itself. Instead, they camped in the surrounding regions. The

Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect did nothing to stop them, and as time went by, more and more arrived.

These were people from all over the eastern river region, people whose cultivation bases... were at the Nascent Soul stage!

Those who were friends with Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect disciples were able to enter the sect. All such people were from the Middle Reaches. None of the Lower Reaches or delta cultivators had friends in the riversource sect, and so none of them dared to do such a thing.

This influx of cultivators fueled all sorts of rumors about the Celestial taking in a new apprentice. The disciples in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect gossiped nonstop about the matter.

“It seems the rumors are true!”

“I can’t believe the Celestial is actually accepting a new apprentice!! Heavens! This is basically a chance to rise to the highest heights in a single bound! The ultimate good fortune!!”

“You know what I heard? The Celestial is going to pick this new apprentice at any moment! And the apprentice could come from any of the four river branches. Up to now, he's only accepted four apprentices....”

“I heard the same thing. Supposedly, the Celestial’s four apprentices... are the four demigod patriarchs from the four riversource sects!!”

Of course, Xu Baocai was on top of the situation from the very get-go. Before long, he had compiled a detailed report, which he brought to Bai Xiaochun.

After hurrying over to the gaping hole in the blue rainbow, he found Bai Xiaochun and said, “Junior Patriarch, something big is happening!!”

Bai Xiaochun was currently holding a jade slip in his hand, a message from Patriarch Steel Veins which contained detailed

information about the matter of the Celestial accepting a new apprentice.

When he heard Xu Baocai's voice, he put the jade slip away, looking clearly shaken.

“Did you hear me, Junior Patriarch?” Xu Baocai gushed. “The Celestial is taking in a new apprentice!!

“Up to now, the Celestial has only ever had four apprentices, and one of them is the demigod patriarch of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

“Now he's accepting a fifth apprentice. As you can imagine... whoever becomes that fifth apprentice will also become a demigod expert one day!!

“I also heard that whenever the Celestial accepts a new apprentice, he'll do so, not just from the eastern part of the river, but from all four branches. The main limitation is that only people in the Nascent Soul stage or above can participate. Other than that, anyone can come register at one of the riversource sects. The riversource sects are prohibited from interfering, and in fact, are responsible for making sure that everyone who registers gets to Heavenspan Island!” Xu Baocai held nothing back, and told Bai Xiaochun everything he knew.

The reason Bai Xiaochun looked shaken was that all the information Xu Baocai had just told him was information he had already been made privy to in the jade slip that Patriarch Steel Veins gave him.

There was another bit of news that Xu Baocai hadn't uncovered, and in fact, very few people were aware of yet.

And that was... the Celestial planned to pick his new apprentice by means of a trial by fire. Apparently, there was an arcane pocket realm on Heavenspan Island that could be entered by anyone from the Nascent Soul stage to the Demigod Realm!

No one knew exactly what would happen inside that pocket realm, but they did know that there was one main requirement.... The first person to get out of it would become the Celestial's fifth apprentice!

Furthermore, the top 100 people who emerged from the pocket realm but didn't become an apprentice would get a special reward!

The mere chance to become an apprentice of the Celestial was viewed by countless people as a matter of unheard-of good fortune. That alone was enough to drive people crazy, even devas.

However, what captured Bai Xiaochun's interest was not the matter of becoming an apprentice, but rather, the special reward!

The runners up... would get a medicinal pill!

They were pills personally concocted by the Celestial, pills that were extremely rare, pills that were called... Millennium Longevity Pills!!

A single such pill would give a person an extra 1,000 years of longevity, and it was no exaggeration to call them immortal pills. Despite being a grandmaster apothecary, not even Bai Xiaochun would be able to make pills like that.

One of the reasons was that among the ingredients was a marvelous type of vegetation that had long since gone extinct!

Bai Xiaochun could tell that Millennium Longevity Pills would be extremely valuable, even to the Celestial!

For cultivators who were at a bottleneck with their cultivation, and had limited time, a Millennium Longevity Pill would be a crucial way to buy more time to make a breakthrough.

It could help Nascent Soul cultivators become devas, and could help devas prepare to become demigods!

As could be imagined, Bai Xiaochun was especially attracted to such pills. After all, his main focus in life was to live forever.

Therefore, to have Millennium Longevity Pills dangled right in front of him caused his eyes to go bloodshot and even twitch because of the internal struggle.

How could a thousand years of longevity not profoundly affect him?

Unfortunately, his encounter with the Celestial back in the Wildlands had left him with a very bad feeling. For him to accept an apprentice at this particular critical moment... seemed very suspicious!

Had the Celestial not received a grievous injury, it might seem less odd. But Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but wonder why he would suddenly be interested in an apprentice, given his current state.

Xu Baocai could see that Bai Xiaochun felt torn about the matter, and couldn't help but wonder why. From what Xu Baocai could tell, Bai Xiaochun could participate and not even try to win. Even considering that it was a competition among chosen from all four of the river branches, Xu Baocai was still convinced that Bai Xiaochun would fare extremely well.

Bai Xiaochun didn't feel comfortable explaining his hesitation to Xu Baocai. He simply sat there, unable to prevent his heart from racing. After sending Xu Baocai away, he sighed.

"To go? Or not to go?" He shook his head, pondering what the best decision was.

Chapter 915: Setting Sail

Bai Xiaochun sat there stewing about the matter for three more days. On the afternoon of the third day, a Dharmic decree came down from the demigod patriarch that was spread to all corners of the eastern Heavenspan River region.

The decree contained two announcements. The first declared that a battleship would be setting sail for Heavenspan Island in one month. Anyone who wished to participate in the trial by fire to become an apprentice of the Celestial needed to be on that ship by then!

The second announcement was that... in addition to selecting an apprentice, the Celestial was holding the trial by fire... to award medicinal pills to increase longevity!

The 1st place winner of the trial would become the Celestial's apprentice!

The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place winners would be given a Millennial Longevity Pill.

The 5th through 10th place winners would win a Quincentennial Longevity Pill, which would bestow 500 years of longevity. Everyone else down to the 100th place winner would receive a Centennial Longevity Pill!

The announcement caused a huge stir, especially among the cultivators who were camped outside of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. And many of the sect disciples who had been on the fence about the matter were immediately thrown into a state of madness.

“Millennial Longevity Pill!?!? With that pill, I could definitely realize my dream of becoming a deva!”

“I might not be able to win one of those Millennial Longevity Pills... but I could definitely get a Centennial Longevity Pill! I'm

gonna go for it!!”

Comotions spread to the most remote mountains of the eastern Heavenspan River. Even many eccentric rogue cultivators were so excited that they decided to participate!

Longevity pills were especially attractive to aging cultivators, who would go to almost any lengths to get them.

As the eastern Heavenspan River went crazy, the other three riversource sects sent out similar news, leading to similar results in the other river branches. It wasn't just chosen disciples who responded. Anyone who held even the slightest bit of confidence decided to participate in this trial by fire!

Even the other devas in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect were excited, as well as experts from the Middle Reaches sects. The Nascent Soul cultivators from the Starry, Dao, and Polarity River Courts all hurried in the direction of the main sect....

The Nascent Soul cultivators in the River-Defying Sect, such as Song Que, were equally excited. Even Master Limitless decided to participate!

Li Qinghou hesitated over the matter for a short time before deciding to stay put.

When Bai Xiaochun realized that even more cultivators would be participating than he had originally imagined, he began to vacillate even more.

About a week later, Big Fatty Zhang came and asked if he would be willing to help. Big Fatty Zhang was worried that his cultivation base was too low, and yet still wanted to search for good fortune in the trial by fire.

At that point, Bai Xiaochun sighed and gritted his teeth. He obviously couldn't become the apprentice of the Celestial. How could he possibly do something like that, considering that he was the Hell-Emperor's Master!? However, he had been losing sleep

and forgetting to eat recently because of those longevity pills.

“Fine, I’ll go for it! Even if I don’t get a Millennial Longevity Pill, maybe I can get one of the 500-year ones!”

Having made his decision, he decided to start getting ready. For one thing, he needed to be ready to help Song Que, Master Limitless, and the others from the River-Defying Sect. On the other hand, he also needed to prepare plenty of medicinal plants and pills.

“There’s definitely going to be a bunch of fighting and killing in that trial by fire. Ai... I have to go in extra prepared.” Thankfully, his status as a prime elder gave him easy access to plenty of resources.

Because he didn’t know how long he would be gone, he also decided to put together an even bigger stockpile of life force pills than he had already built up.

And then there was the matter of Big Fatty Zhang. Unlike Song Que, Big Fatty Zhang was in late Core Formation, and didn't quite meet the requirements to participate. Although helping him make a breakthrough ahead of time would be difficult, Bai Xiaochun was certain he could do it.

Even after all the potential risks were explained to him, Big Fatty Zhang was still determined. Therefore, Bai Xiaochun nodded and prepared to help him push toward a breakthrough.

Unfortunately, they only had about ten more days until the battleship set sail. Therefore, Bai Xiaochun had to use his authority as a prime elder to secure Big Fatty Zhang a place onboard. The plan was for Big Fatty Zhang to achieve his breakthrough either on the ship or after reaching Heavenspan Island. Then he would be able to secure his spot.

If he didn’t achieve a breakthrough, he could simply wait on the battleship until the trial by fire was over, and then return to the

Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

As Bai Xiaochun went about his various preparations, the days ticked by, and more cultivators poured into the region around the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to wait for the battleship to set sail.

One morning at dawn, the Nascent Soul experts outside the sect flew up into the air and looked in the direction of the battleship with deep anticipation.

The battleship began to rumble as surely as if it were some ancient beast coming to life. Slowly but surely, the prow of the ship turned.

At the same time, the archaic voice of the demigod patriarch echoed out from the violet rainbow.

“Everyone who plans to participate in the trial shall board the ship now!”

Instantly, all of the Nascent Soul cultivators flew toward the battleship!

10. 20. 50... 100....

Not all of the Nascent Soul cultivators from the east were present, but most were. In the end, more than 200 beams of light descended onto the battleship.

Among them were Song Que, Master Limitless, and three other Nascent Soul cultivators from the Profound and Pill Stream Divisions. There were many others from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect as well, including Bai Lin, Zhao Tianjiao, and others.

As for Bai Zhentian and the other devas, when they heard that Bai Xiaochun was going, they decided not to go. Therefore, Bai Xiaochun was the only deva to join the group.

As the only prime elder, he was responsible to act as the guardian of the battleship, and the leader of the forces onboard. Most of the cultivators who followed him onboard looked at him with the

utmost level of awe, and offered respectful greetings as soon as he looked at them.

Although Bai Xiaochun was mostly used to his high status, and had started to tire a bit of everyone bowing and scraping all the time, to see so many Nascent Soul experts awestruck by him was quite pleasing.

“Ai. I guess I really am too outstanding. I didn’t even try very hard, and yet, here I am, a prime elder.” Clearing his throat proudly, he waved his sleeve. Then a wistful expression appeared on his face as he thought back to the last time he had boarded this ship, as a mere disciple. Back then, Chen Hetian had been the ship’s guardian.

Now, Chen Hetian avoided him at all costs....

Song Que and Zhao Tianjiao also reacted emotionally upon boarding the ship. The main difference was that, upon seeing Bai Xiaochun there, Zhao Tianjiao sighed, whereas Song Que lowered his head and cursed inwardly.

“What's all the fuss about Bai Xiaochun and his deva cultivation base!? And what is he doing here!?!?”

Bai Xiaochun unhesitatingly arranged for everyone from the River-Defying Sect, as well as Zhao Tianjiao and Bai Lin, to be given the best cabins. With the exception of Song Que.

“Que’er!” he shouted into the crowd, waving his hand back and forth. “Come over here and share a cabin with uncle!”

Song Que’s expression turned very dark, and he ducked his head down further. He had hoped to completely avoid Bai Xiaochun, and yet, still ended up being singled out.

“Dammit, Bai Xiaochun just won’t give up, will he!? If I’d known he would be here, I would have beaten myself to death before coming along.” Although he was nearly going mad with frustration, he couldn’t resist the temptation of being able to stay

in the biggest cabin on the ship. Steeling himself inwardly, he strolled over in Bai Xiaochun's direction, much to the envy of all the other Nascent Soul cultivators.

Before long, all the arrangements had been made, and Bai Xiaochun waved his hand in grand fashion.

“Set sail!”

In response, the disciples who had been assigned to power the ship set to work. Intense rumbling sounds could be heard as the ship then sped up, cutting through the waves as it headed deep into the Heavenspan Sea.

Chapter 916: Big Fatty Zhangs Dream

The instant Bai Xiaochun waved his hand, and the enormous battleship sped off into the distance, the disciples who remained behind on the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's rainbows erupted into excitement.

“Finally! He’s finally gone!!”

“The heavens do have eyes! The freak Bai Xiaochun has left the sect! Every day that he’s around is one lived in abject fear! I just hope he perishes over there. Let god take him as an apprentice!”

“That damned country bumpkin is finally gone! Hahaha! Keep the hell away from our Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!”

The disciples were so excited that some even had tears in their eyes. A few even pulled out gongs and drums, and began to celebrate as enthusiastically as they did during New Year’s.

An atmosphere of joy filled the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and the gongs and drums were soon joined by cheering and delighted laughter.

After all, Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation base was simply too high. Nobody could fight him, and everyone was jealous of him. Therefore, they normally couldn’t give vent to their feelings, and were forced to keep them bottled up. Now that he was gone, they couldn’t hold back from rejoicing.

Although the battleship was some distance off already, it was still close enough... that Bai Xiaochun was able to hear the commotion back in the sect.

He blinked a few times, and then cleared his throat, feeling very moved. Yet again, it was proven how outstanding he was. If he weren’t, then why else would people give him such an enthusiastic farewell?

As thick-skinned as ever, he turned to Song Que, Zhao Tianjiao,

and his other friends and said, “It's been a long time since I've heard that sound. See? Everyone hates to see me go. And when I do, they always throw me a big farewell party.”

Song Que said nothing in response, and a strange expression could be seen on Zhao Tianjiao's face. As for Bai Lin, he simply smiled wryly.

However, it was at this point that Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin up and said, “Hold on! If they want to see me off, then as a prime elder, how could I possibly ignore them!? Men! Stop the ship!”

Although he was making a show of accepting the ‘praise’ of the disciples, the truth was that inside, he was feeling very prickly, and had decided that he couldn't let such behavior slide.

As the most powerful expert on the ship, no one dared to countermand his orders. Within moments, the ship had lurched to a halt.

Back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, the disciples were in the midst of cheering wildly when, all of a sudden, someone noticed that the ship had stopped.

“Hey everybody, look! Why did the ship stop moving?!?!”

“Heavens, what's going on?!?!”

“There's no way that he decided not to leave, is there...?”

It only took a few moments for the entire Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect to go quiet. Countless eyes came to lock on the battleship, and innumerable hearts began to pound with restless anxiety.

On the battleship, Bai Xiaochun stood there, looking back at the sect, which was now completely empty of any sounds of gongs or drums. He cleared his throat.

“Seems they all really are going to miss me. Ah, whatever. I might as well turn the ship around and say some goodbyes.” Marveling at what a master of etiquette he was, he smiled

contentedly. Zhao Tianjiao, Bai Lin, and his other friends all exchanged awkward glances....

Under Bai Xiaochun's orders, the ship... slowly turned around and headed back toward the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect....

The disciples there suddenly felt like their heads were going to explode. Their faces fell, and their minds filled with thundering rumblings.

“What... what is he doing? Why is he coming back?!?!”

“What happened? What is he doing?!?!”

“This is all your guys' fault! You shouldn't have gone so overboard! He's not leaving. Oh, what are we going to do!?”

Even as everyone descended into trembling anxiety, the voice of the demigod patriarch erupted out from the violet rainbow.

“No dillydallying, Bai Xiaochun! Do you have a death wish or something!? Turn that ship around!”

The voice echoed out with such thunderous volume that the sky trembled, and huge waves broke out on the surface of the Heavenspan Sea.

“I just wanted to go say goodbye to everyone....” Bai Xiaochun shouted. “Ah, whatever. Fine, turn this thing around and head for Heavenspan Island.”

There were no other options. He couldn't beat the demigod patriarch in a fight, after all.

It didn't take long for the ship to turn around again, and then sail off into the depths of the Heavenspan Sea. Soon, it vanished over the horizon.

At that point, when the disciples of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect were absolutely certain that Bai Xiaochun was gone, they sighed in relief, and then started to get excited again.

Bai Zhentian finally ended his session of secluded meditation,

and walked out into the open, a smile on his face because of how wonderful life was now.

Although Li Xiandao had warmed up to Bai Xiaochun to a certain degree, he was also relieved to see him gone. At long last, his usual look of detachment appeared on his face again.

As for Chen Hetian, he had been living like a rogue cultivator outside of the sect. As soon as he heard that Bai Xiaochun was gone, he immediately grew very excited.

“The damned bastard is finally gone!” Brimming with anticipation, he headed directly back in the direction of the sect.

Golden waves rolled across the surface of the Heavenspan Sea. It was so beautiful that, even at night, cultivators would go out to take in the scenery. This was a very different scenario than when all of the chosen of the sect had gone to participate in deadly training. Therefore, everyone onboard was feeling quite relaxed.

Many people took the chance to get to know new friends. After all, they would likely be facing dangerous situations when encountering cultivators from the other three branches of the river, people with different techniques and customs.

By working in teams, they would be able to increase their chances of success. Besides, they were all from the eastern Heavenspan River. If one of them ended up as the Celestial’s new apprentice, it would mean great benefits for everyone.

Of course, the Nascent Soul cultivators treated Bai Xiaochun very respectfully. However, the scene which had played out when they were leaving the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had been somewhat unsettling, and therefore, none of them dared to go request an audience and offer formal greetings.

Bai Xiaochun was already feeling bored. Back when he had sailed to the Great Wall, the trip had taken about half a year. Based on his current calculations, this trip would take even longer.

After considering how long the trip would take, he decided that he needed to decide on something to do to pass the time. At the moment, the best thing to do was help Big Fatty Zhang with his breakthrough.

If he succeeded, then he would be able to participate in the trial by fire, and have a chance to become an apprentice of the Celestial.

With that, he headed toward Deck 2, where he had arranged for a very nice cabin for Big Fatty Zhang to stay in.

He found Big Fatty Zhang on the balcony, gazing out excitedly at the Heavenspan Sea.

The furthest he had ever traveled in his life was first from the Spirit Stream Sect to the River-Defying Sect, and after that, to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. He had never actually left the Heavenspan River.

Although he had been in secluded meditation when Bai Xiaochun and the other chosen went to the Great Wall, when he emerged later and learned that he wouldn't have been able to go, he felt very down. Starting from that point, he had a big goal in life.

"I want to travel to the farthest corners of the earth!" That dream was one of the reasons he had been so set on taking this trip to Heavenspan Island. However, there was another reason. Only about half a month ago, he had suddenly dreamed a very peculiar dream.

In that dream, he saw a strange world. After waking up, it was for some strange reason that he felt certain that the trip to Heavenspan Island would be a lifechanging event for him.

"After I formed my Will Core, I very rarely experienced any premonitions like this. However, whenever I did... they turned out to be true. This trip is definitely going to bring me incredible good fortune!" Even as he stood there, eyes shining with determination, Bai Xiaochun arrived.

Chapter 917: Different Means To The Same End

“I'm definitely going to reach the Nascent Soul stage, Xiaochun. Oh, by the way, let me tell you about this dream I had....” Looking very serious, he went on to explain everything about his dream.

As Bai Xiaochun listened, his eyes widened with shock. A strange expression overtook his face, and by the time Big Fatty Zhang finished, he couldn't hold back from reaching out to clasp his shoulder.

“You can do it, Eldest Brother!” Inside, however, he was a bit worried that Big Fatty Zhang was too obsessed with trying to make this particular dream come true. However, worried that he would discourage his Eldest Brother, he offered some more random encouragement. “Wow, Eldest Brother, if you really end up in that strange world you saw, then remember to tell me all about it. I'd like to go see it also.”

Big Fatty Zhang laughed heartily. Then, he sat down cross-legged to meditate according to Bai Xiaochun's instructions.

Bai Xiaochun had come well-prepared to help Big Fatty Zhang with his breakthrough. Before leaving the sect, he had traded one of his deva souls for a set of five elements deva beast souls. After all, he didn't have enough deva souls to make the full set needed for a Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul.

Of course, even Earth-Dao Nascent Souls were incredible, and were considered the peak level of power among devas. As of this moment, Big Fatty Zhang was getting access to resources that only top chosen of the sect would normally see.

Big Fatty Zhang was very well aware of that, and was deeply grateful.

Three months passed relatively quickly. With Bai Xiaochun

standing as Dharma protector, and also providing plenty of medicinal pills, Big Fatty Zhang's breakthrough was going along smoothly.

The truth was that Bai Xiaochun had only heard about Will Cores when Feng Youde brought them up all those years ago.

As for Feng Youde, he had only come to know about them by randomly coming across some information about them when perusing the sect's ancient records. Later on, Big Fatty Zhang came to find that, despite the boost in battle prowess it gave him, the sect in general didn't care too much about his unique type of core. That went to show how unusual it was for people to form Will Cores.

However, because Bai Xiaochun had been anticipating helping Big Fatty Zhang with this breakthrough, he did some of his own research in the ancient records. In fact, he had found the very passages that Feng Youde had come across.

The information wasn't very comprehensive, but he was able to confirm that, in the past, Will Cores had been commonly cultivated by spirit enhancers. In terms of battle prowess, they were roughly equivalent to Earth-Dao Violet Cores. Unfortunately, after being converted into nascent souls, they were merely average.

Furthermore, it was much more difficult for cultivators with Will Cores to achieve breakthroughs.

Because of that, many people viewed them as being of little value or interest. After much research, they were eventually abandoned as a subject of pursuit.

However, because he was so concerned about Big Fatty Zhang, Bai Xiaochun had done some intensive investigation, and had found something of note.

He discovered that within the spiritual power that existed in Big

Fatty Zhang's body, there was a unique strand of energy. Most people who saw that strand of energy would find it unusual, but wouldn't think much about it. However, when Bai Xiaochun saw it, he gasped in shock.

The reason for his surprise was that he had seen the exact same strand of energy when he formed his Gold Core!

Thanks to his study of the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation, he realized that the strand of energy was actually Willpower!

Back when he had ascended to the Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul stage, that seemingly indestructible strand of Willpower had mysteriously vanished. It was something he had never understood, not even after becoming a deva.

Upon returning to the River-Defying Sect, he had asked Patriarch Spirit Stream about it, but hadn't received any new information. Eventually, he had stopped thinking about it. But now that he was working with Big Fatty Zhang, and saw the same type of energy inside of him, his eyes began to glitter.

"Could it be that the Willpower inside of me didn't actually vanish? What if it became an intrinsic part of the spiritual power in my cultivation base?" He did some more checks, but didn't find any evidence to support his theory.

"Just what exactly is this Willpower?" As of this point, he realized that his understanding of Willpower was very lacking. Therefore, he would have to carefully use a trial-and-error method to help Big Fatty Zhang.

Another month passed. Occasionally, the Heavenspan Sea would get choppy. Sometimes, strange and bizarre sea creatures would appear, leading to a buzz of excitement among the Nascent Soul cultivators onboard. However, after enough time passed, most of them went into meditation to further their cultivation.

Eventually, it came time for Big Fatty Zhang to go into seclusion himself. Based on what Bai Xiaochun could tell, his breakthrough would happen in the coming two months.

There was no need for Bai Xiaochun to constantly stand as Dharma protector. As far as the subject of Willpower went, he still didn't have any good ideas, and finally stopped worrying about it.

Because everyone was focused on cultivation, the ship was very quiet. After a bit of thought, Bai Xiaochun decided that he should also do the same. Whether it was his Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation or his Undying Blood, he had packed plenty of supplies before leaving the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. After sending out a sliver of divine sense to keep an eye on Big Fatty Zhang, he went to work.

His Undying Blood was progressing much more slowly than his Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation. After all, it required lots of life force, which made significant progress impossible.

He had acquired plenty of types of plants and vegetation that had life force. The best thing would have been to concoct them into medicinal pills. However, Bai Xiaochun had grown very leery of concocting anything he hadn't concocted before. Besides, doing so on a ship wasn't very appropriate. Therefore, he tended to just directly consume the medicinal plants he had stockpiled.

The profound levels of life force in those particular medicinal plants would make them impossible for any ordinary person to consume safely. But Bai Xiaochun didn't need to worry about such things. He was like a huge black hole that seemed impossible to satiate. As soon as he added any life force, it would immediately be sucked away.

After consuming enough life force, the black hole would glow bright red, and his blood would become more scintillating.

Finally, after an entire month of work, he added a second drop of Undying Blood!

Because of the presence of that second drop, the rest of the blood in his body became more vibrant.

At that point, he opened his eyes, his expression one of slight disappointment.

“The Undying Blood wastes way too much life force! I already ate about half of the medicinal plant I brought along, and all I got was a single drop.” Rubbing the bridge of his nose in disappointment, he contemplated the fact that he had something like 20-30,000 drops of blood inside of him, and realized that mastering the Undying Blood was a very distant possibility.

Even as he was trying to come up with a way to speed things up, he suddenly looked in Big Fatty Zhang’s direction, then vanished. When he reappeared, he was inside of Big Fatty Zhang’s cabin.

Big Fatty Zhang was trembling, had sweat pouring down his body, and thrummed with powerful energy. Bai Xiaochun looked at him closely, and immediately realized that his core was in the process of crumbling.

To step from Core Formation into the Nascent Soul stage, one needed to break down the core and transform it into a nascent soul!

Deva beast souls were used to assist the process, and refine the ultimate form of the nascent soul.

Without the slightest hesitation, Bai Xiaochun performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, sending a stream of white light out that formed a protective shield around Big Fatty Zhang. Big Fatty Zhang ceased to tremble as violently, and his energy surged even stronger. Finally, loud cracking sounds rang out!

His core was crumbling!

All of a sudden, dark clouds began to gather in the sky above the battleship. Lightning bolts began to crackle, causing many of the cultivators onboard to rush out to see what was happening.

“Tribulation clouds?”

“Someone is achieving a cultivation base breakthrough and making a nascent soul?”

Even as the shocked discussions began to play out, a piercing sound filled the air as... a huge face appeared right above the roiling tribulation clouds!

The face depicted Bai Xiaochun!

Rumbling sounds could be heard as he opened his mouth and directly swallowed the tribulation clouds!!

The tribulation clouds were clearly no match for him!

Everyone who saw this event play out was completely stunned.

Chapter 918: A Different Type Of Deva

“He... ate the tribulation clouds?” The Nascent Soul cultivators on the deck were completely and utterly taken aback. They had never even imagined that something like this was possible.

“So that’s what devas can do....”

It would be hard for any of these people to be more shocked than they already were!

There were only a handful of devas in the eastern Heavenspan River region, and few cultivators ever had dealings with them. For most of the people present, this event was something they would commit to memory for a lifetime.

However, the cultivators from the other three great sects in the Middle Reaches were even more shocked than those from the delta and Lower Reaches.

After all, they had had close dealings with devas in the past, namely, their sects’ former patriarchs. And what was shocking was that none of them remembered those patriarchs doing anything like this!

This was heavenly tribulation!!

To devas, Nascent Soul tribulation lightning wasn’t anything particularly incredible, and yet, it was still tribulation sent by heaven and earth. It was a supreme level of power that few people would ever be able to interfere with.

And yet today... Bai Xiaochun had directly consumed it!

Of course, everyone was shaken, but there were a few in the crowd who were even more shaken than the experts from the Middle Reaches sects.

They were Zhao Tianjiao and Bai Lin!

After all, they had much closer relationships with devas than the

other cultivators. One had a Master who was a deva, and the other, a grandfather. Therefore, they knew much more about devas than the average person, to the point where there were very few Nascent Soul cultivators alive who could match their knowledge regarding devas.

And that made the entire situation even more unbelievable, as both knew that neither Bai Zhentian, Chen Hetian, nor any of the other devas could do anything like this!

Most likely, the only person who could possibly do it would be the demigod patriarch!

After the shocking scene played out, the projection of Bai Xiaochun's face faded away, and back in the cabin, his eyes suddenly snapped open.

Even he was surprised by what had occurred. Looking up into the sky, he murmured, "Was that Hao'er helping me?"

One thing he had been wondering about for a while now was why no heavenly tribulation had appeared when he conjured his twenty-one-colored flame.

Actually, despite how terrifying the heavenly tribulation had looked moments ago, Bai Xiaochun had realized almost immediately that the explosive power inside of it had begun to disperse almost as soon as it formed.

It had been almost on a whim that he attempted to consume it, after which he absorbed the power into his own body as quickly as he could.

Even that little bit caused his Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation to stir. Although he couldn't reach the second level, he made significant progress, and actually saved years of cultivation time because of it.

All of that caused him to think about his apprentice, who had become the Hell-Emperor, and actually controlled the cycle of

reincarnation in this heaven and earth.... He was likely the only person who could affect matters such as this.

“It's too bad that Hao'er can probably only do that a handful of times. Otherwise, it would make my future cultivation just too easy.” Although he couldn't be sure that his conjectures were correct, he still felt a fuzzy warmth inside of him when he thought back to his wonderful apprentice.

Of course, as for all of the Nascent Soul cultivators out on the deck, they were awestruck by what they had seen. The image of Bai Xiaochun consuming tribulation clouds would be imprinted into their minds and hearts for as long as they lived.

Because of how Bai Xiaochun got rid of the tribulation lightning, Big Fatty Zhang's breakthrough proceeded very smoothly. Soon, a Nascent Soul aura erupted out from him, which caused a smile to break out on Bai Xiaochun's face.

At this point, Big Fatty Zhang was past any danger. He simply needed time to stabilize his nascent soul, and then end the session of cultivation.

Feeling extremely pleased, Bai Xiaochun set up some restrictive spells to keep Big Fatty Zhang safe, then swaggered out of the cabin. When he reached the deck, the numerous Nascent Soul cultivators there all cast gazes of deep veneration at him as they clasped hands and bowed to him.

Bai Xiaochun had already been in a good mood because of Big Fatty Zhang's breakthrough, and it only got better to see so many people looking at him worshipfully.

“My apprentice really is incredible,” he thought. “Not only did he help me speed up my cultivation, he made sure that everyone here adores me. He completely understands me!” For some reason, the weather seemed particularly good today, so he decided it was a perfect time to stay on the main deck and enjoy the sunshine. As he looked around, he noticed Song Que step out from deck 2, see him,

and then try to duck back through the door.

“Que’er!” he cried. “Come over here. Uncle is in a good mood today, and wants to take you fishing!” Of course, Bai Xiaochun spoke the words much more quickly than Song Que could react.

Song Que stopped in his tracks. He had been working hard to avoid Bai Xiaochun throughout the entire trip so far, and had been caught completely off guard.

Not daring to refuse to comply, he gritted his teeth in frustration and walked over to Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t bothered by Song Que’s bad mood. Flying up into the air, he shoved his hand in the direction of the Heavenspan Sea. The water sank down so rapidly that a few dozen fish were too slow to react, and were left hanging in the air. Bai Xiaochun quickly made a waving motion with his hand, sending them all flying onto the ship.

Strange power existed within these fish, power that could be of great benefit to cultivators. Although Song Que was in a bad mood, when he saw them flopping there on the deck, his heart started to thump in his chest. Without even needing prompting from Bai Xiaochun, he walked over to pick them up.

The other cultivators looked on enviously, but, fearful of Bai Xiaochun, hesitated to step forward.

Bai Xiaochun was not the stingy type, though. As far as he was concerned, when he was happy, he liked everyone to be happy too.

“Come on, everybody!” he cried. “It’s time for a fish feast!”

The Nascent Soul cultivators were thrilled.

“Many thanks, Senior Bai!” All of them began to rush around and pick up fish.

Some of them even flew up to where Bai Xiaochun was and joined in the fishing attempt. One of them was a Nascent Soul elder from

the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect who had been sent along because of his knowledge of the sects from the other three river branches. Although he wasn't planning to participate in the trial by fire, this chance to advance his cultivation base along the way was very pleasing.

And thus, everyone on board the huge battleship had a rare chance... to feast on golden fish pulled right out of the Heavenspan Sea.

In the following days, Bai Xiaochun continued the practice. Sometimes he would fish, and sometimes he would capture other sea beasts that could even be used as ingredients for medicinal pills. He would also spend time practicing cultivation, and consulting with that one particular elder who knew so much about the other three river branches.

By helping to propel the ship with his deva power, he ensured that they made impressive time. All in all, the Nascent Soul cultivators made cultivation base advancement, and felt profound gratitude toward Bai Xiaochun because of it.

"Don't worry about it," he said in response to the expressions of thanks. "We're all from the eastern Heavenspan River, right? We're all on the same team! You know, now that I think about it, considering that there are so many longevity pills up for grabs in this trial by fire, we should definitely split up into teams. Let's not give the cultivators from the other three river branches any chances to get their hands on those pills!"

Sticking his chin up, he swished his sleeve and continued in a loud voice, "Remember, everyone, when we get to the trial by fire, stick together! And if you see anyone from our side getting picked on, roll your sleeves up and get into the fray!"

The Nascent Soul cultivators all laughed heartily. With every moment that passed, their impression of Bai Xiaochun improved, and they felt closer to him. At the same time, their sense of

competitiveness toward their comrades on the boat lessened.

Although Song Que wasn't too happy about everyone coming to like Bai Xiaochun, he also realized why it was happening, and approved. Bai Xiaochun was doing everything he could to make sure the people on their side remained safe.

Zhao Tianjiao and Bai Lin were also reminded of the old Bai Xiaochun they had come to know.

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased to see everyone getting along and even making friends. The truth was that he had a bad feeling about this trial by fire organized by the Celestial. It seemed dangerous for some reason. The fact that he could get the eastern Heavenspan River cultivators to team up was a good thing. Even if they didn't actually manage to get more medicinal pills because of it, at least everyone would be safer.

Another month passed. Big Fatty Zhang finally emerged from secluded meditation, revealing his extraordinary Nascent Soul battle prowess. Relationships were forming among the cultivators on board, and fish feasts were held constantly.

And thus, the ship gradually approached its destination. Heavenspan Island... was getting closer and closer.

Chapter 919: What Trouble Is He Here To Stir Up?

The closer they got to their destination, the less relaxed Bai Xiaochun felt. Not only was Hou Xiaomei on Heavenspan Island, so was that very same figure whom he hadn't seen for many years. Du Lingfei.

The truth was that, other than the chance to get some longevity pills, one of the big reasons he had agreed to come to this event was his desire to make sure that Hou Xiaomei was safe. He had missed her for a long time.

Another reason... was Du Lingfei!

As he stood there on the deck of the ship, looking off into the distance, he murmured, "Back before I left for the Great Wall, she said... that the next time we met, she would explain everything."

He had met many women throughout the years, and although they all had left varying impressions on him, there was something unique about Du Lingfei. Although he came to know her after meeting Hou Xiaomei, there was something about Du Lingfei that made her more unforgettable than anyone else.

They had faced death together in the Luochen Mountains. After the events of the Fallen Sword Abyss, she had suddenly vanished, only to reappear again in the Blood Stream Sect, in the trial by fire for the position of blood master. When the mask fell from her face in the heart chamber of the Blood Ancestor, they had gazed into each other's eyes, both of them shocked to the core....

When he came to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, she had secretly protected him from the shadows, and then gave him a parting gift in the form of a deva soul....

All of those things were unforgettable memories. And yet, by this point, not even Bai Xiaochun was very certain of the true nature of

their relationship.

Perhaps they had once had feelings for one another, but now... he wasn't sure.

Years ago, he had been obsessed with finding out how she truly felt about him. But as time passed, such desires slowly faded. Although they had never vanished completely, based on everything that had happened throughout the years, there seemed to be only one explanation.

"I can pretty much guess who you really are," he murmured, closing his eyes.

Bai Xiaochun wasn't the only one to lapse into solemn silence as Heavenspan Island neared. Everyone onboard felt the pressure building, and slowly became quiet.

No one missed any chances to look at the horizon in the hopes of catching sight of their destination. One day, it was Bai Xiaochun... who noticed a vague form off in the distance.

It looked like an island....

Soon, gasps could be heard on the battleship. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun's eyes began to glitter.

He could see things more clearly than anyone, and thus was able to make out many more details about the island.

It was actually gourd-shaped, with the larger of the two circles forming the main part of the island, and the smaller of the two circles made by the docks. Connecting them was a huge mountain range that rose up like the spine of a dragon.

Lush greenery and ornate buildings covered the place. Particularly noteworthy were three mountain peaks, all of which were covered by spectacularly shocking palaces. The middle peak was the largest, with the two mountains on either side being slightly smaller.

Steep stone staircases wound down the mountain like snakes, leading to various smaller palaces that dotted the mountains. Overall, the island looked like a combination of a beautiful garden and an imperial palace!

This was none other than Heavenspan Island!

The Celestial's Palace of the Dao!

Each and every palace on the island radiated terrifying pressure, and there were so many of them that they were difficult to count. After a short examination, Bai Xiaochun guessed that there were probably over a thousand.

The combined pressure of all those palaces was enough to topple mountains and drain seas, to overturn the world. It was almost as if this island were an enormous, almighty being, gazing down with impunity upon all living beings in the world!

In a grand hall on the primary palace in the middle of the three mountain peaks was an enormous throne crafted from pitch-black crystal. The crystal that made up the throne actually grew up from the very base of the mountain itself, apparently connecting it to the Heavenspan Sea. Black sparks of electricity danced across the surface of the throne, to eventually be absorbed by the mighty figure who sat upon it.

He was none other than the Celestial!

As Bai Xiaochun and his group neared the island, the Celestial opened his eyes, looked at the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's battleship, and frowned slightly.

"Thanks to my wounds, I almost completely forgot.... That's the same kid the gravekeeper managed to reel in, the one rife with Willpower. What trouble is he here to stir up?

"Who would have thought that the old ghost actually let him come back to the lands of Heavenspan.... As calculating as ever, gravekeeper. Well, I'll use him just the same way I used the Blood

Ancestor. I'll do everything the same. When all other plans fail, he will be my most powerful tool. Not only will I not harm him for the time being, I will protect him until he matures....

“You know me well, you old ghost.... The truth is that, unless I have absolutely no other choice... I won't take that final step....” After a long moment passed, the Celestial closed his eyes again.

Despite that, the pressure radiating out from Heavenspan Island grew even more intense!

It was at that exact same moment that Bai Xiaochun's gaze shifted to another location on the Heavenspan Sea.

Before long, three ships appeared, each one coming from one of the cardinal directions.... They were battleships, much the same size as the one from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, although each one looked somewhat different in design and style. All of them were speeding toward the docks on Heavenspan Island.

The ship coming from the west was made of green stone, and seemed ancient beyond belief. It radiated power to shake mountains and dry up rivers as it sped through the sea water.

Bai Xiaochun could just barely make out a crowd of people on the deck of the ship. Furthest toward the prow was a person who attracted immediate attention. He was old, with the demeanor of a transcendent being, and profound deva fluctuations.

The ship coming from the south caused Bai Xiaochun's pupils to constrict. It was made of pitch-black wood, and was surrounded by sinister black smoke. Occasionally, a black dragon could be seen in the smoke, the mere sight of which caused Bai Xiaochun's heart to start racing. Clearly, that dragon was the soul automaton of the battleship!

Seated cross-legged on the head of the dragon was a figure too obscure to be seen clearly. Only a vague outline was visible, and yet, it was possible to tell that his hair was actually the source of all

the black smoke!

Even more eye-catching than the ships from the south and west was the battleship coming from the north. It seemed to be made of pure ice, which radiated a strong frigid qi. Furthermore, countless bolts of lightning danced within the ice, causing booming thunder to echo out in all directions, terrifying thunder that shook the soul.

Most conspicuous of all was the person standing on the prow of the ship from the north. He was a burly man that looked as tall and strong as a tower. In fact, he was at least 9 meters tall, powerfully built, with an aura that caused Bai Xiaochun's pupils to constrict.

It didn't take any consideration or thought to realize that these three ships... were cultivators from the other three branches of the Heavenspan River!

All of the other ships had set sail at roughly the same time as the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's, and had moved with similar speed. Thus, they all arrived at about the same time.

This was Bai Xiaochun's first time actually laying eyes on cultivators from the other river branches. Although he had been given a lot information from that Nascent Soul elder, it was still different to see them personally. Even as he looked them over, the other cultivators on the ship around him did the same.

The pressure they felt immediately mounted. At the same time, the four different ships continued on their way toward Heavenspan Island's docks.

As the ships got closer to each other, the cultivators on the decks became more clear.

It was at that point that the Nascent Soul elder who was an expert on the other three river branches began to provide more detailed introductions to everyone about the various cultivators!

“As you know, the east is controlled by the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. As for the other three rivers, the west is controlled

by the Exalted Zodiac Moon Domination Sect. In the south is the Dragon Totem Ghost Sea Sect. And from the north is the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect!

“Everyone, watch out for the Exalted Zodiac Moon Domination Sect from the west. That old man with a transcendent air is known as Guru Spirit Immortal, and is adept with the Daoist magic of mountains and stones. He can transform living beings into nothing more than soil and rock! He’s very formidable. In general, the Exalted Zodiac Moon Domination Sect is adept with the Daoist magic of the five elements. Although that might not seem like anything extraordinary, their skill has reached the level of being completely terrifying.

“I’m unfamiliar with most of the other Nascent Soul cultivators from the west. But there’s one that all of you should pay close attention to. See that young man standing next to Guru Spirit Immortal? His name is Shi Yan, and he’s widely known as the top Nascent Soul expert in their entire sect. He once fought a shocking battle with someone in the early Deva Realm, and came out alive in the end!”

Chapter 920: Longing For Defeat

After hearing this information, Bai Xiaochun looked over at Guru Spirit Immortal and the arrogant-looking young man standing next to him.

“Another person to watch out for is from the southern Dragon Totem Ghost Sea Sect. See that cultivator sitting on top of the black dragon soul? He’s Master Thousand-Ghost. His Daoist name comes from the fact that he was once an old ghost who had existed for a thousand years. By cultivating the Dao of ghosts, he achieved something completely heaven-defying, and became a deva. His battle prowess surpasses his cultivation level, and each of the one thousand strands of smoke that make up his hair contain a deadly Daoist magic!

“The Dragon Totem Ghost Sea Sect is skilled in shapeshifting arts. When they transform into vicious beasts, their battle prowess skyrockets. Furthermore, just like Master Thousand-Ghost, the disciples all cultivate the Dao of ghosts, giving them bizarre and unfathomable magical techniques.

“Although many people on that boat are rogue cultivators, the Dragon Totem Ghost Sea Sect definitely has one particular chosen who rises above everyone. His name is Sun Wu, the same ‘wu’ character from the word centipede. Look, he’s standing right there on the main deck! His skin is as green as an evil ghost’s! That’s him!”

Looking at the ship coming from the south, Bai Xiaochun could see Master Thousand-Ghost sitting there on top of the black dragon. He seemed partially illusory, and emanated a sinister coldness. As soon as Bai Xiaochun looked at him, he seemed to sense it, and looked over with eyes that pierced like a sharp sword. At the same time, his aura seemed to weigh down on everyone on the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect’s battleship.

“Want to stare at me? Fine. But why try to intimidate everyone else with me?” Bai Xiaochun was not convinced that this person was truly that impressive. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun viewed himself as the type of person who could not be easily cowed. He instantly glared right back. When it came to high-level staring contests, Bai Xiaochun had never truly lost, and as such, was supremely confident.

Whether it was in the Spirit Stream Sect, the Blood Stream Sect, the River-Defying Sect, the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, or the Wildlands.... he was convinced that no one came even close to his skill in staring contests.

Perhaps some people might not believe that to be the case. But whenever he met people like that, he would simply use his gaze to remind them of how dangerous he truly was!

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes almost seemed to contain lightning. There was even rumbling thunder, although no one would be able to hear it except himself and the person whose gaze met his.

Because of that terrifying lightning, Bai Xiaochun suddenly seemed profoundly more intimidating than before. All of his energy was focused on his eyes, which became like two sharp blades slicing through the air, cutting down anything in their path, crushing any life that got in his way until they stabbed directly into the pupils of Master Thousand-Ghost.

“A staring contest it is!” he thought, heart swelling with confidence in his world-wide supremacy in this field.

Master Thousand-Ghost was completely taken aback. Despite the fact that he had existed for a thousand years as an old ghost, he was still shocked to the core. This was his first time seeing this deva from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and the two of them had no feud. And yet, he was glaring at him like some sort of fiendish monster. His fierce gaze, and the way he gritted his teeth, filled Master Thousand-Ghost with a profound sense of unease,

something he was not used to in any sense of the word.

He held his gaze for a moment, then cleared his throat and looked away.

When Bai Xiaochun confirmed that Master Thousand-Ghost was no match for his stare, his heart swelled with pride. As he stood there on the deck of the battleship, he flicked his sleeve, stuck his chin up, and radiated the lonely air of an invincible hero.

“Of course he’s no match for me. Ai.... I wonder if I’ll ever run into someone on my level? I can only hope that, one day, someone will defeat me!” As he stood there sighing, none of the other cultivators realized that Bai Xiaochun and Master Thousand-Ghost had just engaged in an epic staring contest....

Except for Song Que. Song Que knew Bai Xiaochun very well, and had stolen a glance at him moments ago. When he realized what was going on, a strange expression had appeared on his face, and he had to hold back from facepalming.

“They’re both devas... and they’re still into staring contests...?” Song Que simply couldn’t understand the world Bai Xiaochun lived in.

Meanwhile, the Nascent Soul elder from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect continued with his introductions.

“Last is the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect from the north.

“I once went on a mission to gather intelligence on this sect, so I happen to know that although they have a lot of territory, it's actually very sparsely populated. The climate there is horrible, not as bad as the Wildlands, but so intensely cold that the people from there have incredible physiques. The best in the world, actually!

“Their unique location makes them different from the rest of us in the east, west, and south. For all intents and purposes, all of the lands in the north are controlled by one sect. The Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect. There are a good number of cultivator clans

in the area, which is where the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect recruits their disciples from.

“The sect is organized by a delineation of heavens. Disciples start out in the first heaven, and rise through the ranks to the ninth heaven.” At this point, the Nascent Soul elder providing the explanations lowered his voice. “Look over at the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect’s battleship. See the burly fellow up at the front...? He might look like a single person, but he’s not! Look more closely, and you will see the evidence.... He’s really two people combined into one!” Shocked, Bai Xiaochun looked over at the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect with narrowed eyes. As he did...

He realized that the burly man on the deck of the battleship was indeed not a single person. He was in fact two people combined together in bizarre fashion.

One of them had an extremely burly left side. Whether it was his left hand, left leg, or the left side of his torso and head, all were very powerfully built. However, his right side was withered up and shrunken. Because of that, he looked very misshapen and odd.

The other person was exactly the same, except with the sides switched. His right side was powerfully built, and his left side was withered. When those two people stood together, they almost looked like a single person.

Furthermore, their facial features matched perfectly!

As Bai Xiaochun looked over, he realized that, shockingly, both people had mid Deva Realm cultivation bases.

“Together, they form the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect’s illustrious... Master Cloud Lightning!

“Supposedly, Master Cloud Lightning used to be a single person. However, because of cultivating a heaven-defying magic, he failed in his attempt to break through to the late Deva Realm. The

resulting backlash split him into two halves, each one of which contains a separate consciousness!

“However... the twin Master Cloud Lightnings possess a secret magic that allows them to temporarily combine back into the true Master Cloud Lightning. When they do, his cultivation base rises... to the late Deva Realm!” As Bai Xiaochun listened to the introduction, his eyes grew wider and wider. The devas from the other two sects were both in the mid Deva Realm, which wasn’t very intimidating. However, when the twin Master Cloud Lightnings combined and rose to the late Deva Realm, that was something to pay close attention to.

After all, despite the fact that Bai Xiaochun could defeat someone in the mid Deva Realm, he wasn’t quite sure about the late Deva Realm.

“Now take a look at the three people standing behind Master Cloud Lightning. Those are all ninth heaven experts in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage. They are Han Yuemei, Zhong Zhenshan and... Master Lightning Origin! Master Lightning Origin is the one and only elite apprentice of Master Cloud Lightning. See, he’s right there behind Master Cloud Lightning, the skinny one that’s hunched over like a monkey....

“You have to be very careful around him. He’s far more powerful than Han Yuemei and Zhong Zhenshan. Very dangerous! Furthermore, he’s the type to seek revenge over the smallest grievance, and has a reputation for being vicious and merciless. He’s not the type you want to mess with blithely!” By this point, everyone was getting much more familiar with the other three sects.

Bai Xiaochun took a bit longer to look over the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect. He had never forgotten what Patriarch Spirit Stream told him many years ago.... The Spirit Stream Sect had once been the Frigid School from the north. The Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect formed only after destroying the Frigid

School, and was their biggest arch-enemy!

Bai Xiaochun did not have a good impression of this sect at all. Lip curling, he murmured, “Their deva cultivated himself into two separate psychos.... Of the ninth heaven cultivators, the most dangerous, Master Lightning Origin, looks like a monkey.... What kind of a freak sect is this?!”

Around this time, the four battleships neared the docks. Then, rumbling sounds filled the air as they settled into place!

After the ships came to a full stop, the cultivators from the four river branches began to disembark, shivering apprehensively.

Even more than before, the various cultivators looked around to measure up their rivals from the other sects. Of course, the other three river branches also had Nascent Soul elders who were giving introductions to their compatriots.

Considering how many people were looking at him, Bai Xiaochun’s curiosity was piqued. Sending some divine sense out, he began to eavesdrop on what people were saying....

Chapter 921: The Noble Du Lingfei!

“Everybody pay attention to Bai Xiaochun from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Just because he’s a deva doesn’t mean that he’ll hold back from fighting Nascent Soul cultivators. You’d be gravely mistaken if you thought he would. According to our intelligence report, he’s a twisted individual who takes delight in bullying people weaker than him. He’s definitely the most powerful deva from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and yet, for his entire life, he’s done nothing but oppress those with lower cultivation bases than himself! He’s the epitome of shamelessness, and all of you need to be very careful around him!”

“All of you need to be on guard against Bai Xiaochun. He's done a lot of very strange things in his life. He served on the Great Wall, then disappeared into the Wildlands for several decades. When he came back safely, he was a deva! What’s most terrifying about him, however, is not his cultivation base. It’s his medicinal pills! According to the limited information we have access to, if he's given the right opportunity, his pill concocting methods can destroy an entire riversource sect!!”

“Perhaps you people might not have heard of Bai Xiaochun. However, you’ve surely heard of the Fantasy Pills that come from the eastern Heavenspan River. Remember the catastrophes that resulted years ago because of those pills? Well... this guy is the despicable villain who created them!”

When Bai Xiaochun heard what the people from the other three river branches were saying about him, a strange, embarrassed look appeared on his face. Then he shook his head.

“I can’t believe I’m so famous.... When did my Fantasy Pill end up reaching the west? Are they the same as the ones from Sky City? And who said I like to bully people with a lower cultivation base than me!? That’s just called playing it safe!!” Despite being slightly irritated, he was generally pleased by how famous he was.

Even he hadn't been aware of how far his name had spread.

“Hmmmphh! If they knew that the Giant Ghost King is my father-in-law, and that my apprentice is the Hell-Emperor, then they would definitely be scared out of their minds!” Thinking in that way made him feel even more pleased.

However, it was at about this time that he suddenly heard the sound of people talking... from the direction of the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect.

“Bai Xiaochun? Hmph. He just got lucky, and became a deva earlier than expected. It won't be long before I become a deva, and then I'll definitely defeat him in battle!”

“He's pretty good-looking. Too bad he's a guy.”

The people who were speaking were Nascent Soul cultivators, and their words were not pleasing at all to Bai Xiaochun. He immediately glared over in their direction, which attracted the attention of the twin Master Cloud Lightnings, who looked back in his direction.

The instant their gazes met, Bai Xiaochun's spirits lifted.

“Hey hey! Another staring contest, huh?!” Obviously, Bai Xiaochun would never willingly be outdone at his own favorite hobby. Therefore, he intensified his glare. However, it was only moments later that he was shocked to find how incredibly intimidating Master Cloud Lightning was.

“Dammit, there are two of them!”

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings looked at him coldly with two sets of eyes. Their gazes were incredibly intense, which made it difficult for Bai Xiaochun to stand up to them alone. He quickly called Song Que over to help him. However, before they could team up, the cultivators from the four different battleships all fell silent.

That was when Bai Xiaochun noticed that a group of people had

stepped onto the docks, having just emerged from the majestic mountains that linked to the main part of Heavenspan Island.

In the lead... was a beautiful young woman wearing a long, violet gown embroidered with nine phoenixes. She had a crimson mark on her forehead, and there was something about her that seemed profoundly noble. When she looked out at everyone, her gaze seemed like the type that no one could defy.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun saw her, a tremor passed through him, and complicated feelings rose up in his heart. He suddenly had no interest in the staring contest with the twin Master Cloud Lightnings. All he could do was look quietly at the young woman.

She was none other than Du Lingfei.

They hadn't seen each other in a very long time, and for some reason, she seemed more noble than she had in the past. As she stood there, it was clear that she was the focus of all the eyes present.

There was definitely something different about her, and it couldn't help but make him feel that she was a bit of a stranger.

Flanking Du Lingfei were two groups of cultivators. On her left side was a group of female cultivators in red clothing, while on her right side were male cultivators in blue clothing. All of them were spectacularly good-looking.

A mere glance at the two groups of cultivators would cause anyone's eyes to glitter. They were dressed alike down to the smallest detail, and were arranged in perfect ranks. Furthermore, they pulsed with incredible energy, as though all of them were capable of drawing upon the might of Heavenspan Island itself. Overall, they were very impressive.

Bai Xiaochun quickly spotted Hou Xiaomei in one of the groups, and Ghostfang in the other.

In almost the same moment, Hou Xiaomei caught sight of him,

and the faintest shadow of a smile appeared on her face. A sparkle of joy could also be seen in her eye; if it weren't for the solemn responsibilities she held, she would clearly have run over and hugged Bai Xiaochun.

Ghostfang also noticed Bai Xiaochun, but his face remained expressionless, and he barely glanced at him.

When Bai Xiaochun saw Hou Xiaomei safe and unharmed, he breathed a sigh of relief. However, he couldn't shake the mixed emotions that had risen up inside of him because of Du Lingfei.

At this point, Du Lingfei smiled and said, "Greetings, Fellow Daoists, and welcome to Heavenspan Island."

There was a dignity within her voice that was backed by the might of Heavenspan Island, something magical that caused it to penetrate deep into the hearts and minds of everyone present.

Somber expressions could be seen on the faces of all of the cultivators present. The deva experts all stepped forward, clasped hands and bowed.

"Well met, Emissary." The polite words were uttered by the twin Master Cloud Lightnings, Guru Spirit Immortal, and Master Thousand-Ghost. None of them had ever seen Du Lingfei before, but knew that she had a special status, and didn't dare to say anything that might offend her.

Bai Xiaochun almost didn't want to step forward. But considering that he was the deva in charge of the group from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, he knew he had to. Sighing, he clasped hands and bowed. However, he truly couldn't think of the right words to speak.

The other devas noticed this, and were inwardly shocked. However, Du Lingfei's expression softened into a smile when she saw Bai Xiaochun bowing to her. However, she didn't say anything. Instead, she arranged for her special guards to formally

receive all of the visitors from the four rivers.

Each river branch had brought a few hundred people. Added together, there were about a thousand, which made the docks relatively crowded at the moment. However, thanks to Du Lingfei's arrangements, there was no chaos or confusion.

"Fellow Daoists, it's already getting late, so please follow these special guards to your accommodations. Rest up, for early in the morning, when the bells toll seven times, people will come to take you for an audience with the Celestial." After a moment of thought, she added, "By the way, there are many restricted areas on Heavenspan Island. In order to prevent any unforeseen circumstances, I would like to ask you to remain indoors through the night. Otherwise... the guards in those locations might injure or kill you, and we wouldn't want that."

There was nothing threatening about the way Du Lingfei spoke. In fact, her voice was kind and warm. However, the words themselves struck fear into the hearts of all the cultivators present.

Even the devas were shaken.

Heavenspan Island was the nucleus of all the lands of Heavenspan, and although the Celestial's Palace of the Dao wasn't particularly large, it was clearly as dangerous as a dragon's pool or a tiger's den. In fact, even demigod experts who acted improperly would be killed instantly!

Because of that, the visitors didn't even need any reminders from Du Lingfei to keep them in line.

The accommodations that had been arranged for them were not on the large part of the island, but rather, in the buildings which surrounded the docks. Four main areas had been set up, with large buildings set aside for people who had come on formal visits.

As for the main part of the island, no one was allowed there without the express invitation of the Celestial himself. The only

thing they could do was gaze from afar at the three mountain peaks, and the occasional patrols of special guards that wound their way among the countless palace buildings.

Bai Xiaochun didn't say anything as the Heavenspan Island special guards made their arrangements. Clearly, Hou Xiaomei wanted to come over, but she had been assigned to a different group, and could only gaze at him through the crowd.

By evening, the more than 1,000 Nascent Soul cultivators had been taken to their various accommodations by the special guards. As a deva, Bai Xiaochun had a special courtyard residence to himself, which was much closer to the main entrance leading to the mountains of the island.

The spiritual energy here was strong beyond belief, far stronger than in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. However, Bai Xiaochun was not in the mood for cultivation. As the sky grew dark, he sat there cross-legged, waiting.

He was sure that... Du Lingfei would come to visit him this very night!

Chapter 922: Who Is Du Lingfei?!

Night fell. The only sound to be heard was the gentle lapping of waves against the island, making everything very peaceful.

As Bai Xiaochun sat cross-legged in meditation, his heart slowly grew calm. He had made his decision way back on the battleship. His trip to Heavenspan Island was for the purpose of getting a longevity pill, making sure that Hou Xiaomei was safe, and also... to find out why he had been so obsessed with Du Lingfei.

He didn't sit reminiscing about the past. He just waited quietly.

The same pressure from before weighed down on the island, and in fact, the lack of any sound other than the waves made that pressure seem even more intense. As a result, all of the visitors felt more awe and fear than ever.

Such feelings were more intense among those with higher cultivation bases, the reason being that they could more clearly sense... an aura that destabilized their cultivation bases and left their minds reeling. That aura could crush them out of existence at will!

It was the most paramount of auras, the type that could not even be threatened by the heavens. In fact, the heavens even seemed ready to bow to the source of that aura!

An aura like that, something completely domineering and elevated... could only belong to one person in the Heavenspan Realm... the Celestial!

That knowledge made the cultivators of the four rivers even more enthusiastic than before. The mere idea of becoming the apprentice of the Celestial was profoundly exciting.

Not even the devas could control their emotions. After all, the rules had not stipulated that only Nascent Soul cultivators could win the chance to become an apprentice.

The only qualification... was to be the first person to emerge from the trial by fire.

Although the level of one's cultivation base could play into that, luck was a larger factor. And therefore, although devas did have an advantage, that advantage would only help them to a limited extent.

As the night grew darker, most of the visiting cultivators sank into trances as they practiced cultivation. No one left their living quarters. It wasn't that they didn't want to; they didn't dare to.

Not only had Du Lingfei offered that warning of hers, but the pressure that weighed down made it clear that only someone suicidal would go out into the open.

Bai Xiaochun made the same decision, and simply sat waiting.

Late in the night... he opened his eyes and looked over at the front door.

In almost the same moment, an entrancing voiced drifted in from outside.

“Can I come in?”

Only that one sentence was spoken, nothing else. Bai Xiaochun sent some divine sense over to the door, and could see Du Lingfei standing outside. She wasn't dressed like she had been during the day. She wore a white gown that was not ostentatious like her earlier garb, and made her seem just like she had been back in the Spirit Stream Sect days.

That gave Bai Xiaochun pause for thought. A moment later, he waved his hand, and the door opened, revealing Du Lingfei standing there with a smile on her face.

Their gazes met.

They were the same people that they had been all those years ago. However, on this occasion, Bai Xiaochun chose not to call her

‘boo’.

“It's been a long time,” she said. When she saw that Bai Xiaochun wasn't inclined to say anything in response, she laughed softly and then walked inside. Tucking a stray strand of hair back over her ear, she said, “Why aren't you saying anything?”

As the moonlight tumbled down onto her from above, it made her look as delicate as fine jade. There was something beautiful, pure, and holy about her.

When Bai Xiaochun caught the fragrance of her perfume, his heart began to beat a bit faster. After a moment of hesitation, he decided to just tell the truth. “I don't know what to say.”

Seeing that he was remaining seated, she sat down cross-legged in front of him and placed her hands on her knees.

“Why don't you tell me about your time in the Wildlands?” she said, not sounding the least bit irritated.

He took a breath, and smelled her perfume again. Then he went on to give a brief overview of his time in the Wildlands, leaving out the details of his secret identity.

In the end, he looked her in the eye, took a deep breath, and said, “Thank you for that deva soul.”

He didn't tell her that he had ended up forming a Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul, and only casually mentioned some of the main events during his Wildlands adventures. She didn't press for details. It was almost as if both of them were holding back from saying the things they truly wanted to say.

Eventually, they lapsed into silence. Although they made a pretty picture, silhouetted against the moonlight, both of them felt like they were strangers to each other.

The sound of the waves surrounded them, seemingly attempting to draw them closer together, and yet failing.

After some time passed, Bai Xiaochun suddenly asked, “Who exactly are you...?”

It was the same question he had asked before leaving for the Great Wall. Way back then, she had told him that when he returned, she would tell him the truth.

Therefore, he finally decided to simply ask the question.

Du Lingfei didn't seem surprised at all, as if she had been waiting for him to ask. She didn't respond at first, and didn't even look at him. But after a moment passed, she looked up into his eyes.

“The Celestial... is my father.”

Although Bai Xiaochun had suspected for a long time that this was the case, to hear the words spoken directly, and to have his suspicions confirmed, caused waves of emotion to surge in his heart.

He couldn't control his breathing at first. Despite the fact that he had considered the possibility, now that he knew the truth, there were many things that suddenly made sense.

It made sense why Du Lingfei had such a special status in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. If the rumors were true that the demigod patriarchs of the four riversource sects were the apprentices of the Celestial, then that made Du Lingfei their Junior Sister!

With an identity and background like that, Du Lingfei had an extremely unique status in the Heavenspan Realm. She was like a pearl of matchless quality!

However, there were still unanswered questions. As the Celestial's daughter, a person with incredible standing, what had she been up to in the Spirit Stream Sect? And why did she appear later in the Blood Stream Sect...?

Such questions popped into his mind, and they led to more questions. And then, all of a sudden, he remembered something

that caused him to tremble involuntarily....

He had absorbed a blood-hair from the Celestial.

Back when he did it, he had hesitated. But the Celestial had been such a distant figure at the time, and the hair had been given to him by the gravekeeper. Therefore, he had simply braced himself and gone through with the plan to absorb it.

But now, he was on the Celestial's doorstep... and Du Lingfei was the Celestial's daughter.

"I see," he thought. "Now it makes sense why the demigod patriarch of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect only let me off with a warning when I caused so much trouble with my pill concocting...."

Settling his thoughts, he asked, "Did you arrange for Hou Xiaomei to be brought here?"

She actually didn't answer his question directly. She simply looked at him and smiled, much the same way she had back in the Luochen Mountains. She rose to her feet, walked over, and arranged his clothing like a wife would her husband's.

Her proximity made the smell of her perfume even stronger, and caused his heart to beat faster.

After smoothing out his robes, she looked into his eyes, mixed emotions swirling in her own. Immediately, Bai Xiaochun could sense that her life had not been as happy and carefree as might be expected considering who she was. In fact, she seemed exhausted, and even forlorn.

The way she looked at him dredged up memories from the past that suddenly caused him to address her the way he had so long ago.

"Boo...."

She shivered as memories of her own overtook her thoughts. A

moment passed, and then she leaned over, put her lips right next to his ears, and spoke in the quietest of voices.

“Xiaochun... be careful... of Hou Xiaomei.”

With that, she looked him in the eyes one more time, then turned and faded away into the air....

Chapter 923: Just Like Old Times

As Du Lingfei's words rang in his ears, Bai Xiaochun suddenly went slightly stiff. Turning his head, he looked in the direction in which she had just vanished. Despite the fact that she had used the power of Heavenspan Island to fade away, he could still make out the faint shadow of her figure.

He felt like going after her to ask more questions, but before he could, she entered the depths of the island.

“What did she mean by that...? I'm supposed to be careful of Hou Xiaomei?” The more he thought about it, the more suspicious it seemed. Furthermore, he couldn't tell if she had been sincere or not.

Either way, his uneasiness at the fact that Hou Xiaomei had become a special guard on Heavenspan Island only grew more intense than it had been before.

“Why do I need to be careful of Hou Xiaomei?” He thought back to when he had seen her earlier that day, and from what he remembered, she hadn't seemed any different than she had in the past. And the happiness in her eyes when she spotted him had seemed real.

However, he couldn't stop thinking about what Du Lingfei had just said. As he did, his vexation grew. The truth was that, the entire time he had been on Heavenspan Island so far, he had felt uneasy.

After some more thought, he sighed. The best thing to do would be to find a chance to go talk with Hou Xiaomei. Even as he thought such things, his expression flickered, and he looked up.

Moments later, he saw a beam of light streaking through the darkness toward him.

It came to a stop outside his residence, converging into the form

of a person who spoke in a sweet, sentimental voice.

“Big Bro Xiaochun!”

It was none other than Hou Xiaomei! She wore the same long, red garment that she had worn earlier in the day. She was beautiful, her normally fair face flush with joy, and her eyes sparkled with excitement.

Seeing Hou Xiaomei caused the things Du Lingfei had just said, and the suspicions they had aroused in his heart, to vanish for the moment. Hou Xiaomei looked exactly like she had earlier in the day, and the same as he remembered her from the past. This was the very same girl who had stuck so close to him in his early days in the Spirit Stream Sect. She was Xiaomei, and she really was like the perfect girl next door.

In sharp contrast to his somber reaction to seeing Du Lingfei, Bai Xiaochun rose to his feet and excitedly threw his arms wide. Blinking, he smiled mischievously and said, “Long time no see, Xiaomei. Come come, give your Big Bro Xiaochun a hug!”

The light flush of joy which had covered her face instantly transformed into scarlet. Then she glared at him angrily, and yet, at the same time, rushed over and embraced him, burying her face in his neck.

At first, she didn’t hug him very hard, but as the moments ticked by, and she thought back to how lonely she had been since coming to the island, her grip tightened, as though she didn’t wish to let him go.

When he felt how tightly she was hugging him, his mischievous smile faded into one of tender affection. He wrapped his arms around her, stroked her long black hair, and breathed in deeply. She smelled completely different than Du Lingfei.

He suddenly thought back to the first time he had ever laid eyes on Hou Xiaomei. She was the first girl that had ever truly captured

his attention, although he had always been confused about how he felt toward her. All he knew was that right now, he was sure that he liked her, even though he didn't know why.

Throughout the years he had known her, he had seen her act like a hot pepper around other people, but charming to him. That had always made him feel very good about himself.

As he held Hou Xiaomei, he came the conclusion that there was nothing out of the ordinary about her. She had not changed. She was exactly like she had been before.

As she lay nestled in his arms, she murmured, "Big Bro Xiaochun, after all the years that have passed, I wasn't sure if you would even remember me...."

Already, her mood seemed to be sinking.

Bai Xiaochun quickly sat down with her and started telling her his stories about the Wildlands. He didn't go into all the details, only some of the most interesting parts. Soon, Hou Xiaomei's mood improved, and she even started laughing.

Covering her smile with her hand, she said, "Come on. There's no way that you bossed devas around."

When Bai Xiaochun realized that she didn't believe him, he gave up on being so humble. Glaring at her, he thumped himself on the chest and said, "That was nothing! A demigod gave me his daughter's hand in marriage! All of the nobility and aristocracy in Arch-Emperor Dynasty were scared of me!"

Hou Xiaomei laughed. "Alright, alright. I believe you. I do, alright? You were definitely awesome! My Big Bro Xiaochun is the most awesome person under heaven!"

When Bai Xiaochun heard her laughter and saw the gleam in her eyes, his heart suddenly began to race, and he realized that he had been mistaken. Hou Xiaomei had changed. Her immaturity was gone, to be replaced by a certain charm and charisma.

“Another vixen!” Bai Xiaochun exclaimed inwardly. “How could I have not seen it before...?” Swallowing hard, he contemplated how Hou Xiaomei might actually end up surpassing Song Junwan....

However, the fact that his heart had begun to race simply because she was looking at him was actually a bit embarrassing. Clearing his throat, he decided to change the subject, and asked Hou Xiaomei about how she had ended up being picked to go to Heavenspan Island.

She immediately gave a snort of irritation.

“What, you think I'm Song Junwan or something? That old crone has been plotting for years to get you, Big Bro Xiaochun. She might have put on a show of taking care of me, but she used her status as the leader of the Blood Stream Division's Middle Peak to beat me down over and over again!”

“What?” Bai Xiaochun blurted in shock. He couldn't envision Song Junwan being a person like that, and even opened his mouth to try to explain. However, Hou Xiaomei apparently realized what he was going to do, and continued speaking before he could.

“Big Bro Xiaochun, you really have no idea. That old hag Song Junwan always shows off every chance she can get. I can't even stand talking with her. As far as she's concerned, I'm just an annoyance!

“Back in the competition to come here, she and I fought a duel in the semi-finals. Her cultivation base was higher than mine, and she had already won several victories. Even if she lost to me, she would still have a chance to go on. But it was my last chance! If I lost, then I would be out. Can you believe that she didn't show the slightest mercy!? I even explained everything to her, and she still beat me.” The more Hou Xiaomei talked, the madder she got.

“Thankfully, the elder in charge from Heavenspan Island saw something special in me, something that makes me suitable to the divine abilities of Heavenspan Island. That was the only reason

that in the end, I got chosen, and that old crone didn't." As Hou Xiaomei blurted out all her accusations against Song Junwan, Bai Xiaochun's head started to swell.

From what he could tell, Song Junwan and Hou Xiaomei simply couldn't see eye to eye on anything....

And apparently, it all stemmed back to the days of the Spirit and Blood Stream Sects, after the war was fought and the two of them helped nurse him back to health....

He suddenly thought back to how both of them would brew medicine for him, and then watch closely to see which one he would pick. Then his heart trembled as he remembered how, on one occasion, they had waited to see which foot he would use to step outside the door....

He quickly changed the topic, worried that a bigger problem could arise if the current conversation continued.

Hou Xiaomei was just happy to see him, so she didn't mind that he changed the topic. She sat next to him and softly told him about some of the interesting and funny things that had happened while he was gone.

She also told him a few things about Heavenspan Island. Bai Xiaochun smiled, occasionally gasping in praise, and occasionally throwing in a few boasts of his own. Eventually, dawn approached, and Hou Xiaomei reluctantly left.

Soon, the cultivators from the four rivers would go to offer their respects to the Celestial, an important event in which Hou Xiaomei had her own duties to attend to.

After seeing Hou Xiaomei off, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and thought back to her visit. No matter how he looked at it, he couldn't think of anything that had seemed suspicious at all.

In fact, that made him suspect Du Lingfei's words!

"Why would she tell me to be careful of Hou Xiaomei?" No

amount of thought brought any insight. Eventually, the sun rose.

As the first rays of light shone out across the golden Heavenspan Sea, the sound of an ancient bell rang out across the island....

Chapter 924: A Lock Of Father-In-Laws Hair

The bell tolled seven times, which was the summons for the cultivators from the four rivers to go see the Celestial.

The sound of the bell, coupled with the dazzling sunlight reflecting off of the golden sea water, made for a spectacular scene.

In the middle of the main island, the three mountain peaks caught the sunlight and reflected it, making for a particularly eye-catching scene. At the same time, the silent pressure weighing down grew more intense.

At about this time, the special guards who were tasked with leading the groups of cultivators into the main island appeared outside of the various residences. The person who had come to lead Bai Xiaochun was a beautiful female cultivator, and was not the same person that had led him to the residence the day before.

It was impossible to tell which river branch she had originally come from. However, considering that Bai Xiaochun was a deva, she treated him with the utmost deference. Even though she was an initiate special guard here on Heavenspan Island, she still didn't dare to act inappropriately in front of a deva.

The initiate special guards were only in the Core Formation stage, but even Nascent Soul experts would treat them politely. Despite that, the guards would not dare to use their status as an excuse to treat a deva improperly.

After all, devas were very important people to the Celestial, far more important than an initiate special guard.

The woman led Bai Xiaochun along a winding path deep into the mountains.

Their destination looked like a celestial paradise, complete with singing birds and blooming flowers. Lush vegetation grew everywhere, and spiritual energy abounded. There were also spirit

beasts that dashed to and fro among the greenery.

Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun noticed quite a few varieties of extremely rare spirit plants!

In the outside world, they would be almost impossible to find, but here on Heavenspan Island, they grew everywhere!

He was quite taken aback. He even noticed some shocking medicinal plants which were supposedly extinct. If he took one of those plants outside, everyone in the world would go crazy....

“Such extravagance....” he thought. Although he had seen many extraordinary things in his life, he still had to swallow down his astonishment, and work hard to resist the urge to reach out and harvest some of the plants.

As he walked along, he saw more and more rare spirit plants, and also... extraordinary magical items!

Some of them even had spirit automatons, and flew about in groups as if they were alive. It was truly a shocking sight.

Occasionally, rivulets and streams could be seen, within which flowed water that wasn't golden, but rather, violet.... Based on what Bai Xiaochun could sense, the spiritual energy in that violet water surpassed even the golden sea water!

He could also sense auras near the streams and rivulets that were shockingly impressive. From what he could tell, they belonged to plants, magical items, or possibly... deva-level spirit beasts!

Everything that he saw reinforced his assessment that this was a shocking and extravagant place. Although Arch-Emperor City in the Wildlands had been impressive, it couldn't compare to this at all.

This really was a celestial paradise!!

The initiate special guard who was leading him glanced over occasionally to size him up. When she saw how shocked he was,

she felt very pleased. She was proud to be an initiate special guard, and thirsted for the day when she might get a promotion to being a full special guard.

Bai Xiaochun didn't notice her change in attitude. All he could think about was how he was on a virtual mountain of precious items. Just about everything around him could increase his cultivation base or add to his longevity. He almost couldn't resist the urge to reach out and touch them.

Eventually, they reached the very depths of the island, a location very close to the three mountain peaks. At one point, Bai Xiaochun got the distinct sensation that they had just passed through some invisible barrier.

A sound met his ears like a rushing waterfall, and he looked up to see something completely unexpected!!

Waterfalls poured down from the summits of the two mountains on the right and left. It was almost like water cascading from the highest heavens, which then collected in a huge lake in the middle of the island!!

The very center of Heavenspan Island wasn't a flat plain.... It was actually an enormous lake!

It was a lake of violet water, and the three towering mountain peaks rose up from the very middle of it! The waterfalls from the two side mountains fed the lake, and created not only a thunderous roar, but also, a vast quantity of water vapor.

Numerous palaces could be seen within the mists, which rose up along with the three mountain peaks.

There were so many luxurious palaces constructed on the three mountains that Bai Xiaochun couldn't even count them all.

There was an enormous statue on the central mountain peak, which Bai Xiaochun instantly recognized. It depicted... the Celestial!

At the feet of the statue was the largest and most magnificent palace in all of the Heavenspan Realm!

The Palace of the Celestial!

The entire area had come to be known by a special name.... The Palace of the Dao!

Bai Xiaochun was completely shaken. Because of how much mist filled the area, the Palace of the Dao was difficult to see clearly. However, it was still possible to make out countless palace maids and numerous special guards, all of them standing silently with looks of proud arrogance in their eyes.

The female cultivator led Bai Xiaochun to a huge public square at the edge of the lake, just across from the main mountain peak. From this location, it was possible to look up and see the huge statue of the Celestial, which seemed to prop up the very heavens.

There were already quite a few cultivators gathered in the square, all of whom were looking up at the statue, eyes burning with veneration.

Big Fatty Zhang and Bai Xiaochun's other friends were there, all of them seemingly overwhelmed with emotion. When they and the other cultivators from the eastern Heavenspan River noticed Bai Xiaochun, they hurried over.

“The Palace of the Dao is the most extravagant palace I’ve ever seen in my life!”

“Did you guys see the medicinal plants? I saw an immortal asura orchid on my way over! Heavens! Those orchids only grew in ancient times! Supposedly, if a mortal ate one, he would immediately rise to the Core Formation stage!!”

“That’s nothing. I saw a two-headed dragon! Did you hear me? A dragon! With two heads! You almost never see those in real life!”

Everyone was very excited, and couldn’t stop talking about everything they had seen.

The truth was that the Palace of the Dao really was a profoundly shocking place.

Bai Xiaochun looked up at the huge statue of the Celestial, which was remarkably lifelike. Based on what he remembered of the Celestial, this statue looked exactly like him in every way.

In fact, he happened to notice that there on the statue's forehead... was a lock of blood-red hair!

He suddenly shivered. At the same time, he heard a voice speaking loudly from among the nearby cultivators from the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect. It was the twin Master Cloud Lightnings!

“Do you see that blood-hair on the exalted Celestial's forehead? According to the legends, that's actually a precious treasure of life force, forged by the Celestial himself. It contains boundless power, and is a rarely-seen type of good fortune containing unfathomable mysteries!”

The instant Bai Xiaochun heard the twin Master Cloud Lightnings introducing that blood-hair to the other cultivators, his anxiety and guilt grew.

He couldn't help but have a bit of a guilty conscience. Besides, if the Celestial found out that he had actually absorbed the blood-hair... he might very well refine Bai Xiaochun to replace it!

“That blood-hair wasn't as amazing as the twin Master Cloud Lightnings makes it sound. All it did was push me to the great circle of the Undying Bones!” All of a sudden, he thought about what would happen if his relationship with Du Lingfei went to the next step, and the Celestial ended up as his father-in-law.

If it was his father-in-law who found out later that he had absorbed that hair... it probably wouldn't be as big of a deal....

Having reached this point in his train of thought, he blinked a few times, and then looked around for Du Lingfei.

Chapter 925: Let The Trial By Fire Begin!

Even as Bai Xiaochun started to look around for Du Lingfei, someone inside the grand hall on top of the main mountain peak looked down, casting a gaze onto the lands below that caused the sky to grow dim and a huge wind to kick up.

The Heavenspan Sea went still, as did the waterfalls and the surface of the lake. Because of that gaze, the entire island began to tremble.

Everyone in the square, including Bai Xiaochun, felt their minds reeling madly. All talk ceased, and all hearts began to race as an indescribable pressure suddenly weighed down on all of them.

It was so intense... that none of them could move a muscle!!

Not even Bai Xiaochun and the other devas could move. The level of pressure weighing down on them was so intense that rumbling sounds filled their bodies.

“The Celestial!” This was not Bai Xiaochun’s first time sensing the might of the Celestial. Back in the Wildlands, he had felt this very same pressure.

Now, though, things were different than in the Wildlands. The Celestial’s aura seemed more explosive and violent, to the point where Bai Xiaochun felt his internal organs trembling.

It was energy that surpassed the Deva Realm by many times, and even the demigod level. This was the absolute peak level of power in this world!

“He's not injured?!?!” Bai Xiaochun thought, shivering. The other devas were shaking uncontrollably, so there was little need to mention the Nascent Soul experts, whose minds were almost complete blanks.

It was at this point that a young woman walked out from the palace at the foot of the huge statue. She wore garments adorned

with phoenixes, and radiated nobility. She was none other than Du Lingfei!

As she floated there in midair, with the enormous statue behind her, she spoke in a mighty voice that echoed out in all directions.

“Bow!”

In immediate response, everyone in the square, including Bai Xiaochun, involuntarily clasped hands and bowed deeply to the statue of the Celestial.

“Greetings, Celestial!”

Their combined voices created a sound wave that caused heaven and earth to tremble. Their voices quavered with zeal and fervor, the raw adoration for someone who commanded the ultimate level of power!

As everyone bowed, Du Lingfei turned to the side in deference. Then, when the crowd below had finished offering formal greetings, she turned back and looked over the crowd. Her gaze lingered on Bai Xiaochun for only the slightest moment, and didn't reveal any sign of recognition.

“Fellow Daoists, you already know the rules of this trial,” she said coolly. “The first person to emerge will become the Celestial's next apprentice.

“In terms of the time limit... there is none!” With that, she waved her hands, whereupon the special guards in the square began to distribute jade slips to all the cultivators present.

“These jade slips will record your activities in the trial by fire, and when you find the exit, they will act as authentication devices to bear witness to your success!” After finishing her explanation, she extended her hand to summon a violet rock. Waving her hand, she sent the rock flying down toward the lake below.

The rock became a violet beam of light that, just before it hit the surface of the lake, exploded. Water sprayed out in all directions,

and then... a huge stone gate rose up from the bottom of the lake!

It was fully 300 meters tall, and radiated an aura of profound ancientness. It was engraved with countless vicious and snarling faces, lifelike to the extreme, to the point where it was almost possible to hear them howling.

Black mist swirled off of the surface of the gate, transforming into ninety-nine black dragons whose howls shook heaven and earth. Each dragon was 3,000 meters long, and they all twisted and spun up into the sky, as though they wished to break through to the area beyond the heavens.

Compared to the dragons, the stone gate was so tiny as to be insignificant.

Everyone in the square was shaken to the core by what they were seeing.

As the dragons howled, a cold snort suddenly echoed out from the enormous statue of the Celestial, a snort that was as heaven-rending and earth-crushing as a bolt of lightning from the heavens.

The dragons' howls of rage transformed into piteous wails of despair and defiance, and then they shattered into pieces.

The entire process only lasted for a few breaths' worth of time. The dragons collapsed into black mist that swirled around the stone gate and transformed into an enormous vortex.

As the vortex spun, immense levels of power gripped the stone gate, tugging at it... until cracks began to spread out on its surface!

At the same time, a dark and sinister aura began to seep out from the cracks, making it seem as though all the lands would be plunged into wintry cold!

It was a frigid qi that seemed capable of freezing souls. Even Bai Xiaochun shivered as he looked at the cracks which, despite not seeming very big, were actually dozens of meters wide.

Not even by calling upon the full power of his deva cultivation base was he able to see the world that existed beyond those cracks clearly.

Despite that, both Bai Xiaochun and everyone else present could tell... that this trial by fire would be very difficult. The twin Master Cloud Lightnings, Master Thousand-Ghost and Guru Spirit Immortal all had very serious expressions on their faces, and it was the same with all of the various Nascent Soul cultivators.

Song Que, Bai Lin, Zhao Tianjiao, Heretic, and everyone else present was completely shaken.

The gate leading to the trial by fire was completely bizarre, and at the same time, led almost everyone to the same question: why was the Celestial using these rules and this dangerous trial by fire in order to select a new apprentice?

After all, the Nascent Soul cultivators who were participating in the trial were cunning foxes whose understanding of the art of scheming surpassed cultivators of lower levels. It would be almost impossible for them to avoid being suspicious of situations like this.

Everyone in the crowd was so shocked that none of them noticed how Big Fatty Zhang's eyes were wider than anyone else's. And that was because... he had seen this stone gate in his dream!!

“One last reminder....” Du Lingfei said softly. Instantly, the cultivators in the square looked over at her.

“The trial by fire consists of an enormous land that, despite not being endless, is so huge it defies description.... It consists of four main areas: a deep marsh, a wild jungle, a vast plain, and a barren desert!

“Whatever magical items you bring with you into the trial by fire will not function.... Pay attention to your spiritual power. In the land of the trial by fire, spiritual energy is scarce....

“To come out on top in the trial by fire, and in fact, to simply survive, you will need to carefully control your spiritual power. However... there are many unbonded magical items inside. If you can acquire them, they will increase your battle prowess and make it much easier for you to succeed!

“You won’t be the only ones inside the trial. I will lead a group of Heavenspan Island’s special guards inside, and we will be tasked with supervising, appraising, and adjudicating disputes!” Du Lingfei’s words caused most of the crowd in the square to relax a bit. Now that they knew they wouldn’t be alone, but would have Heavenspan Island’s special guards in the trial with them, they felt much safer.

Furthermore, Du Lingfei, who was the Heavenspan emissary, would also be going in. Because of all of that, everyone felt much less nervous. The twin Master Cloud Lightnings, Master Thousand-Ghost and Guru Spirit Immortal were also relieved.

Although they weren’t personally aware of all the details of Du Lingfei’s identity, they had been devas for many years, and had many speculations. The fact that Du Lingfei was personally entering the trial by fire led them to the conclusion that, although there would be danger, it truly was being held to pick an apprentice for the Celestial!

When Du Lingfei saw everyone breathing sighs of relief, she reached out and pointed at the stone gate.

“Let the trial by fire... begin!”

A gravitational force sprang out from the vortex, causing rumbling sounds to fill the air. At the same time, the cracks on the door widened, sending even more frigid qi out.

Although the frigid qi was intense, it couldn’t match the burning passion in the hearts of the trial-takers. Without any hesitation, they began to fly into the air, and then pass through the stone gate!

Chapter 926: Land Of Dangers!

The cultivators from the west, south, and north made for a total of over 600 people. There were also several hundred special guards from Heavenspan Island. All of them flew into the air toward the stone gate.

The group from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect exchanged glances, then took deep breaths and did the same. Big Fatty Zhang hesitated for a moment, then looked over at Bai Xiaochun, nodded, and also headed toward the gate.

As Song Que, Zhao Tianjiao, Bai Lin, and many other familiar faces headed toward the gate, Bai Xiaochun's eyes flashed with determination, and he also headed forward. However, before entering, he noticed a group of seven or eight special guards approaching.

One of them was Hou Xiaomei.

“Good luck, Big Bro Xiaochun!” she said, keeping her voice down, but smiling broadly. Bai Xiaochun was actually a bit surprised. Although he had seen Hou Xiaomei in the special guards earlier, it hadn't occurred to him that she would actually be participating in the trial by fire.

Hou Xiaomei was only in Core Formation, so as far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, going into the trial by fire would be a very dangerous thing for her.

“You're coming too?” Bai Xiaochun said nervously. “Well, why don't you go in with me? It's going to be dangerous!”

She blinked a few times, and then covered a smile with her hand. “Okay, sure! It would be great to have you there to protect me, Big Bro Xiaochun.”

There wasn't anything particularly strange about her words, but for some reason, Bai Xiaochun felt that there was something odd

about her. In fact, he could even detect an unusual, sinister aura on her that felt distinctly uncomfortable.

However, there wasn't any time to think about it right now. After all, the frigid qi from the stone door had filled the area, and he couldn't quite tell for sure if what he was sensing was that, or something specifically coming from Hou Xiaomei. Either way, it put him on guard.

It was difficult to see anything in the area, but it was possible to detect a powerful force of teleportation building up. As the teleportation formation inside of the stone gate was activated, intense rumbling sounds erupted into the ears of everyone present.

It felt as if the air were being ripped open around them, as though powers of both gravitation and repulsion were being exerted at the same time. Then, Bai Xiaochun's vision swam.

When it cleared... he was in a completely unfamiliar world!

A desert stretched out around him, and off in the distance, he saw a sandstorm that looked like a massive ocean of sand. And it was heading in his direction! It was so shockingly powerful that any dunes it encountered were instantly razed flat!

Shockingly, he could see a cultivator tumbling through the air inside of the sandstorm. Although he couldn't see the man's face, based on his clothing, he was from the Dragon Totem Ghost Sea Sect. At the moment, he was letting out a bloodcurdling scream.

A moment later, the cultivator exploded, sending blood spraying out in all directions, and staining the sand around him bright red. However, in the blink of an eye, the screaming winds erased any evidence of the blood!

Bai Xiaochun was completely shaken by what he was seeing. Looking around, all he could see was endless desert, without a single person visible anywhere.

The sky was violet, and yet the light it cast down didn't make

anything difficult to see. Right now didn't seem to be the time for protracted thought, so Bai Xiaochun immediately began to edge backward.

As he did, twinges of pain shot through his leg, only to vanish moments later. It only took a moment to realize that the pain had come when he moved backward, and the sand shifted against his leg.

When that happened, he came to a shocking conclusion about how the Dragon Totem Ghost Sea Sect disciple he had just seen ended up dying. He simply couldn't fight back against the power of the sand storm, and had been shredded to pieces.

Shockingly, each grain of sand in this desert contained the power of a divine ability from the early Nascent Soul stage. Every single bit of sand contained deadly power if it hit a person, not to mention if someone was tossed into an entire storm of it.

The sandstorm also exerted a powerful gravitational force that would make it very difficult to escape once sucked in. As Bai Xiaochun realized these things, he gasped in shock. Although he had a deva cultivation base, and shocking fleshly body power, both of which made it possible for him to shrug off an attack from an early Nascent Soul stage cultivator, his keen senses told him that the power of the sandstorm increased the further one went inside. In fact, he wasn't sure how long he would last if he got sucked in that far.

“What the hell kind of trial by fire is this? How come this place is so dangerous!?” Already, the gravitational force was tugging at him. Furthermore, the haze of the sand being kicked up into the air made it difficult to see very far.

A Nascent Soul cultivator, or even a half-deva, would have almost no hope of surviving in this area. However, Bai Xiaochun was a deva. Despite being shaken, he unhesitatingly called upon his Undying Hex, and began to flee at incredible speed.

Because of the conflict caused by the gravitational force and his incredible speed, intense rumbling sounds rang out. Thankfully, though, he shot like an arrow off into the distance, buffeted by the wind and pelted by sand and rubble.

Even after breaking free, he kept flying at top speed for several hundred kilometers. Only then did he stop and look back at the distant sandstorm, his heart pounding with residual fear.

Only at this point did he realize that occasional lightning bolts danced through the sandstorm, releasing muffled cracks of thunder.

“This trial by fire is terrifying!” he thought, his eyes wide. As of this point, he was absolutely certain that the sandstorm would be the death of any Nascent Soul cultivator who was unlucky enough to encounter it, and didn’t have any special means of fleeing.

“I felt like I was almost ripped to pieces by the teleportation power of that gate. That was much more power than any ordinary teleportation. That means that we’ve either ended up in a very distant location... or had to pierce through an indescribably powerful barrier!” Already, he was starting to regret coming here.

And yet, the thought of the longevity pills caused him to grit his teeth and push forward. Along the way, he tested some of his magical items. Unfortunately, accessing his bag of holding wasted spiritual power, and furthermore, anything he brought out seemed locked down in some way, making it completely useless.

The teleportation had sent the nearly one thousand cultivators from the various river branches to different locations within the enormous land that made up the trial by fire. Because of that, the only way they could run into each other was by blind luck.

One upside was that his transmission jade slip still worked. Sadly, based on the fluctuations coming from it, he could tell that, even with his deva cultivation base, it would only have a range of about 500 kilometers.

Messages that weren't received by another jade slip within that area would simply vanish.

Another disquieting fact was that the spiritual power... was far weaker here than in the outside world. To most of the cultivators present, that would be very difficult to deal with.

Of course, to Bai Xiaochun, it wasn't a problem at all. After all, there was actually more spiritual power here than in the Wildlands, where he had lived for many years. He had long since grown used to the practice of conserving energy, and only using it in bursts when necessary.

Furthermore, his impressive fleshly body made it so that he didn't actually need to use divine abilities powered by his cultivation base to unleash deva-level battle prowess.

“This place is so dangerous! Hou Xiaomei, Big Fatty Zhang, Song Que, Bai Lin, and everyone else... are in great danger!” Then he thought about that strange, sinister feeling he had sensed from Hou Xiaomei earlier, and he started to get more nervous. He pulled out his transmission jade slip and sent some messages. Unfortunately, only people within 500 kilometers would get them. When he didn't receive any replies, he picked up speed and proceeded along anxiously.

Chapter 927: Evil Intentions

The lands that made up the trial by fire were split into four major areas, a desert, a swamp, a plain, and a jungle. They didn't interlock, but rather, were separated by enormous mountain ranges and other terrain features.

Although the lands were not endless, they were certainly vast.

Furthermore, hidden dangers lurked everywhere. That included both natural occurrences like the sandstorm, and bizarre entities of every sort. All of them could be extremely deadly.

Before entering the trial by fire, the cultivators from the four major rivers had all assumed it would be dangerous. Even still, now that they were inside, they were completely shocked by what they were facing.

In fact, the word 'danger' couldn't be used to describe the place. It was more like... a land of death!

Currently, Shi Yan, chosen from the Exalted Zodiac Moon Domination Sect in the west, was traversing the swamp area of the trial by fire. Despite being in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, his face was ashen with terror as he proceeded along with the utmost caution.

His clothing was ripped and torn, and also stained with blood. After teleporting into the trial by fire, he had seen three people killed right in front of him. Most terrifying of all... was that the creatures responsible for those deaths were a variety of leech that lurked in the marsh waters. They traveled in swarms numbering in the thousands, which could, in only a single breath of time, completely cover a cultivator. Upon vanishing back into the swamp, they would leave behind only a dry and desiccated corpse.

Within moments, countless larvae would burrow into the desiccated corpse and nest inside of it....

Because of that, Shi Yan was gripped with terror as he proceeded along.

He wasn't the only one in the swamp. Sun Wu from the Dragon Totem Ghost Sea Sect was present as well. He was also a chosen, with a cultivation base in the great circle of the Nascent Soul, who bore the physical appearance of an evil ghost. Although he wasn't currently wounded, he trembled as he stood in place... unwilling to take a single step forward.

The reason he refused to move was that he was surrounded by more than 10,000 shocking mosquitos!

The mosquitos were human-sized, and created a thundering rumble with the buzzing of their wings. Were it not for the fact that Sun Wu had a secret magic to keep himself invisible to them, they would have long since sucked the life completely out of him.

The monkey-like Master Lightning Origin from the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect was in a similar position in the jungle. An unsightly expression could be seen on his face, which dripped with sweat as he rushed along, chased by a troupe of crimson-eyed monkeys who thrummed with shocking power.

Big Fatty Zhang, Bai Lin, Zhao Tianjiao, Heretic, Song Que, and many other friends of Bai Xiaochun were in similarly terrifying situations.

The level of danger in this trial by fire surpassed what anyone could have imagined. Right now, they had no other options than to flee for their lives!

It was the same with Bai Xiaochun, who sped through the desert at top speed. So far, he had spotted seven sandstorms, all of which radiated incredible power that left his heart pounding in his chest.

If all he had to deal with were natural disasters, then it might not have been as terrifying. However, Bai Xiaochun's deva-level divine sense had long since revealed to him that there were terrifying

fluctuations hidden within the desert. There were some brutal entities there which seemed to be on the same level as devas. Even worse, there were certain creatures which seemed to be trailing him, as if they were predator and he was prey!

“This trial by fire is not suitable for Nascent Soul cultivators at all! Only people with deva cultivation bases could possibly be of use here!

“Dammit! The Celestial used the pretext of selecting an apprentice to gather a whole group of Nascent Soul cultivators to come into a place like this...? Just what is he up to!? This... is definitely not an arcane pocket realm!”

Bai Xiaochun was really starting to feel nervous, both for Big Fatty Zhang and his other Nascent Soul friends, and also, for Hou Xiaomei.

Thankfully, Hou Xiaomei was a special guard, and therefore, would likely be in a much safer position than the other cultivators. However, Bai Xiaochun still couldn't stop worrying about her.

Even as he sped along, his heart suddenly leapt up into his throat. Without any hesitation, he utilized the Mountain Shaking Bash, bursting forward with speed that bordered on teleportation. In the blink of an eye, he was 300 meters away.

In almost that exact same instant, numerous booming sounds echoed out as eight crimson figures blurred through the spot he had just occupied.

As soon as they flew back up into the sky, Bai Xiaochun could see them clearly. Shockingly, they were eight enormous sandworms!

They looked like crimson maggots, hundreds of meters long, with no eyes, but terrifying, gaping maws, within which glistened row upon row of razor-sharp teeth!

One of the sandworms had a red aperture on its head that emitted a strange power in the form of a loud cracking sound.

From the nature of that aperture, it was obvious that some incredible magical device was imbedded inside of the sandworm. It was the strongest of the bunch, being comparable to the mid Deva Realm. The others were similar to the early Deva Realm. As soon as the entire group regathered up in the air, they turned back in Bai Xiaochun's direction and shot toward him again, screeching in bizarre voices.

Bai Xiaochun was already panting in anxiety. If he only had these eight sandworms to worry about, it might not have been a big deal. But he could sense countless similar fluctuations in the surrounding area, all of them rushing toward him at high speed.

It wouldn't be long before even more sandworms were upon him.

The idea of innumerable sandworms beneath the surface of the desert, all closing in on him, caused him to shiver and push forward with renewed speed.

Unfortunately, no matter how he zigged or zagged, a sandworm would end up bursting out of the ground to block his path. It continued to happen over and over again, until he started to really get angry.

"Complete and utter bullying!" He knew that he couldn't keep up this same tactic, otherwise he would never escape, not unless the sandworms just gave up.

He only had one option... strike fear into their hearts!

With that, he gritted his teeth and spun to face the group of eight. Howling, he singled out one of the sandworms that was in the early Deva Realm and unleashed a vicious fist strike!

He didn't draw upon his cultivation base, only his fleshly body. And yet, that still enabled him to strike with mountain-toppling, sea-draining force. A cultivator in the early Deva Realm would be crushed by this attack, much less a sandworm the likes of these.

Rumbling sounds echoed out into the far distance as the front

half of the sandworm exploded, and the back half dropped down with a thud onto the desert floor, sending sand flying out in all directions.

When the other sandworms saw that one of their own had been destroyed, they reacted with utter madness. Opening their mouths, they sent countless bolts of lightning shooting out. However, it was at that exact same moment that a figure blurred onto the scene from off in the distance.

It was none other than one of the twin Master Cloud Lightnings from the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect. If one considered them to be brothers, then the older brother was the one whose left side was withered, with the right side being strong.

The younger brother was the opposite. He made a bizarre sight as he shot forward with astonishing speed that seemed even faster than Bai Xiaochun. After all, he was in the mid Deva Realm, and used a secret magic from the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect to add further speed to his movement. He sped through the desert, pursued by more than 10,000 sandworms, who were dogging him relentlessly, making escape impossible.

When Master Cloud Lightning noticed Bai Xiaochun, his eyes glittered, especially because of the sandworm with the red aperture on its head.

He stopped for a brief moment, until the sandworms behind him were almost right on top of him. Then, he turned and shot toward Bai Xiaochun!

Clearly, he hoped to pass his huge group of sandworms onto Bai Xiaochun!

Chapter 928: Bullying Me?!

Bai Xiaochun noticed Master Cloud Lightning almost as soon as he appeared, and most especially, the horde of sandworms following him.

“So, this Master Cloud Lightning is trying to pull a fast one on me, huh?!” He could immediately sense Master Cloud Lightning’s ill intentions, especially because of the way the man was eyeing the sandworm with the red aperture on its head.

“He wasn’t originally heading in this direction. He changed directions when he saw that one particular sandworm....” Having reached this conclusion, Bai Xiaochun immediately attacked that same sandworm.

“See me coming, and refuse to stand down?” Master Cloud Lightning said with a growl. “Well, you’re just looking to die!” His eyes shone with cold light as he accelerated in Bai Xiaochun’s direction, bringing countless howling sandworms with him.

As Master Cloud Lightning closed in, Bai Xiaochun spun, changed directions, and then headed, not toward the sandworm he had been fighting, but toward Master Cloud Lightning!

Master Cloud Lightning’s lips turned up into a sneer, as if he had anticipated Bai Xiaochun’s actions. Even as Bai Xiaochun closed in, he suddenly blurred, making him impossible to see with the naked eye, and almost impossible to detect with divine sense.

Even as Bai Xiaochun’s eyes flickered in surprise, the vast number of sandworms that Master Cloud Lightning had brought over locked onto him. Howling, they opened their mouths and swept forth to encircle Bai Xiaochun.

An unsightly expression could be seen on his face. The divine ability that Master Cloud Lightning had just used had already affected him dramatically. Although most of the more than 10,000

sandworms were at the Nascent Soul level, there were some who were in the Deva Realm, which meant that it would be very difficult to handle the entire group.

That was especially true... considering that Master Cloud Lightning was lurking menacingly in the vicinity.

Rumbling sounds could be heard as the shadowy form of Master Cloud Lightning backed away, a sneer on his face the entire time.

“Measly rookie deva! They might say he has incredible battle prowess, but rumors like that are usually just fabrications. If he had fled the moment he saw me, he might have had a chance. Unfortunately for him, he’s just an idiot.” Chuckling coldly, Master Cloud Lightning watched through narrowed eyes as the hordes of sandworms closed in on Bai Xiaochun.

The truth was that Bai Xiaochun was starting to get very angry at how this Master Cloud Lightning seemed to abound with wickedness. They had no beef with each other, and yet he had acted with utter viciousness, all because of a sandworm!

“Maybe if I were a Nascent Soul cultivator, this would make sense. But I’m a deva too! This Master Cloud Lightning is obviously looking down on me! The bully!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes narrowed. Blurring into motion, he unleashed attack after attack, blowing up sandworms with each one.

“Based on the speed he used earlier to fall back... he’s obviously no ordinary deva.... If I simultaneously used my Undying Hex and the Mountain Shaking Bash, I might be able to get close to him. But if he kept running afterward, the sandworms would still be after me, and that would put me in a bad position. I need to get him to come a bit closer to me....” Scrambling to come up with an idea, he took a deep breath, then shot forward toward Master Cloud Lightning with a burst of speed.

As he did, a faint smile of ridicule could be seen on Master Cloud

Lightning's face as he accelerated away. After a few such exchanges, Bai Xiaochun not only didn't catch up to him, but actually seemed to be getting himself into a worse situation with each moment that passed.

Finally, a vicious expression overtook Bai Xiaochun's face. Gritting his teeth angrily, he ignored Master Cloud Lightning and spun to attack the sandworm with the red aperture.

Booms rang out as the sandworms spat lightning out of their mouths, filling heaven and earth in such fashion that it seemed it would be impossible for Bai Xiaochun to fight back. However, it was at this point that the sandworm let out a terrifying shriek; it had been battered so badly by Bai Xiaochun's divine abilities that it seemed on the verge of collapsing completely.

Master Cloud Lightning noticed what was happening, and it caused his eyes to flash with bright light. Although he couldn't be sure whether Bai Xiaochun was feigning weakness or not, he was supremely confident in himself either way.

"The point here isn't to kill this guy, it's to get the magical item in that sandworm's body...." Eyes narrowing, he began to search for an opportunity. At this point, Bai Xiaochun landed a fist strike onto the sandworm, causing it to shriek and fall back.

That was when Bai Xiaochun made his move. He shot forward with such incredible speed that it bordered on teleportation, leaving a string of sonic booms behind him. In the blink of an eye, he was on the sandworm, reaching out with his right hand, the fingers of which glittered with black light.

However, just before his hand landed on the sandworm, his eyes glittered with gold light, and he utilized the Mountain Shaking Bash. Rumbling sounds echoed out as he accelerated with shocking momentum, surpassing the sandworm.

Any sandworm in his way was bashed to pieces, allowing him to shoot as straight as an arrow toward Master Cloud Lightning.

The speed was such that Master Cloud Lightning was struck with absolute shock. Snorting coldly, he gave up on his designs for the sandworm, and shot backward, still confident that not even someone in the late Deva Realm would be able to catch him. At the same time, he reinforced the secret magic he was using to make sure the sandworms couldn't detect him.

In that moment in which Master Cloud Lightning accelerated again, Bai Xiaochun utilized his Undying Hex. In the blink of an eye, his speed broke past its previous limit, causing him to shoot after Master Cloud Lightning like a bolt of lightning.

Because they had already been relatively close, he didn't hesitate to follow through with... the Throat Crushing Grasp!

Considering that Master Cloud Lightning was in the mid Deva Realm, Bai Xiaochun's goal with the Throat Crushing Grasp wasn't to kill him, but rather... to limit his speed and drag him in with gravitational force.

As soon as he unleashed the technique, the gravitational force erupted out, and Master Cloud Lightning's face fell with the realization that he was decelerating.

"This Bai Xiaochun really is a strange one!" he gasped. Everything happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off a piece of flint. There was no time to ponder what to do, so Master Cloud Lightning bit his tongue and spat out a mouthful of blood. Despite the difficult situation he was in, he still managed to speed up again!

A faint buzzing sound could be heard as he faded away even more; it almost seemed like he had limitless stores of energy to draw upon. A single step backward took him 3,000 meters away, and yet, even as he moved away, a smile appeared on Bai Xiaochun's face.

This was just what he had been waiting for; for Master Cloud Lightning to use a trump card to gain more speed.

It was in that exact moment that Bai Xiaochun's Heavenspan Dharma Eye opened, causing violet light to spill out and latch onto Master Cloud Lightning like fetters.

Master Cloud Lightning could tell that trouble was brewing, and it caused his face to fall. It suddenly felt like he was stuck in sludge, and in fact, was temporarily incapable of moving at all.

Although it only lasted for a short moment, when devas fought, many things could happen in that amount of time.

"Undying... Emperor's Fist!" Bai Xiaochun shouted. A black vortex sprang up around his hand, and a shadowy emperor appeared behind him. Then, the fist strike was unleashed!

It was a quintuple strength Undying Emperor's Fist!

Sand blasted out in all directions, and the nearby sandworms trembled and screamed. At the same time, Master Cloud Lightning's eyes widened.

Never could he have imagined that a single lapse in judgement on his part would lead him into such a deadly moment of crisis!

"What divine ability is that!?" All of a sudden, the burly right side of his body swelled, erupting with black light. At the same time, he drew upon as much spiritual power from his cultivation base as he could, causing the black light to take the shape of an enormous devilish god!

The devilish god radiated extraordinary energy, the type that could crush even the heavens. However, it only had half a body! It wasn't complete! Even still, it lunged forward to defend against Bai Xiaochun.

In the blink of an eye, it slammed into the Undying Emperor's Fist!

A huge boom erupted out in all directions!

Chapter 929: Whats The Big Deal?

RUMBLE!!

Nearly half of the desert area was shaken by the intense boom. Master Cloud Lightning let out a miserable shriek as his devilish god collapsed into pieces, and the black light which surrounded him was destroyed.

Blood spraying out of his mouth, he tumbled backward like a kite with its string cut. Even as he did, he touched his forehead, causing a stream of black light to fly out.

Shockingly, it transformed into a semi-translucent buckler, which he grabbed and threw out in front of him.

“Detonate!!” he shouted, and the buckler exploded, sending a blast of energy out to meet Bai Xiaochun’s heaven-destroying, earth-extinguishing fist strike. That brief opportunity was what Master Cloud Lightning needed to shoot away at top speed, coughing up blood the entire time.

Most of the energy passageways in his body were destroyed, and his vision swam. Mentally, he was completely shaken.

“How could he be so strong?!?! I’m in the mid Deva Realm, and he’s only in the early realm!!” Master Cloud Lightning felt like he was going crazy, and still couldn’t keep the blood from spraying out of his mouth.

For the first time, he regretted his earlier conceit, and realized that he should never have been so impulsive as to provoke the terrifying Bai Xiaochun, all because of a simple magical item.

Some of it stemmed from the fact that the buckler he had just destroyed was a treasure he had only just recently acquired, which was what had enabled him to maintain a state of near-complete invisibility. It was that shield that made him realize that this trial by fire... was full of hidden treasures!

After seeing the glowing red aperture on the sandworm, his greed had been awakened.

Meanwhile, the shockwaves caused by his exchange of blows with Bai Xiaochun caused many more sandworms hidden beneath the surface of the ground to be reduced to nothing more than ash.

Even the sandworm with the red aperture on its head, having been damaged by both Bai Xiaochun and Master Cloud Lightning, finally couldn't hold out any longer, and was destroyed.

As it collapsed into pieces, a red glow shot out from inside of it, coalescing into the form of a flying shuttle. Astonishingly, the shuttle was covered with magical symbols that clearly did not originate in the Heavenspan Realm.

The symbols almost looked like tadpoles, wriggling in bizarre, lifelike fashion. As soon as the flying shuttle was out in the open, it swiveled as if to spin off into the distance. However, Bai Xiaochun had been watching it the entire time, and quickly reached out to grab it.

The shuttle struggled a bit, but to no avail. As soon as Bai Xiaochun had it, he sent some divine sense inside to study its structure. It was different from any other type of magical item he had ever seen before, and yet, he could still leave a branding mark on it, allowing him to control it.

As soon as the branding mark settled down inside, the flying shuttle became calm, and then, began to power up as if to unleash an attack!

"An assault treasure!" Master Cloud Lightning blurted, his eyes going wide, and his heart dripping with figurative blood. The only things he had acquired so far were utility treasures. The fact that this flying shuttle was an assault treasure meant that its value was beyond compare.

Now was not the time for jealousy, though. He was already

seriously injured. And considering how terrifying Bai Xiaochun was, he decided to use a secret magic that drew upon his longevity in order to put some distance between the two of them.

Lightning and thunder crackled as Master Cloud Lightning became a lightning bolt that shot off toward the horizon, leaving a trail of frozen air behind because of the frigid qi that surrounded him.

The faster he moved, the less likely it would be that anyone would be able to attack him. As such, he managed to escape with his life.

Unfortunately, the drainage was significant, and potentially dangerous.

In the hopes of not wasting too much longevity, he looked over his shoulder and shouted, “This was a misunderstanding, Fellow Daoist Bai! Our sects have been friends for years, and therefore, I can offer an explanation for--”

“Explanation my ass!” Bai Xiaochun roared.

At the moment, he was really angry. He hadn’t done anything to provoke anyone. Master Cloud Lightning had been the one to attack him. It might have been one thing if he just tried to unload a bunch of sandworms on him. But then there was his overt sneering, and the fact that he had tried to steal that magical item.

Bai Xiaochun cared about his poor little life more than just about anything else, and therefore, it was something sacrosanct as far as he was concerned. The fact that Master Cloud Lightning had plotted against him in deadly fashion was something he couldn’t ignore.

Furthermore, he had been forced to use his Undying Emperor’s Fist, something he had hoped to avoid in the early stages of the trial by fire. His plan had been to conserve as much power as he could, but thanks to Master Cloud Lightning, he had done the

opposite.

Because of how furious he was, there was no way he would just let his enemy escape. Cursing, he unleashed his top speed as he gave chase. Although he had already wasted significant fleshly body power, he was now in the Undying Blood level, not the Undying Bones.

Therefore, his regenerative capabilities were shocking, to say the least. As his qi and blood returned to normal, he used his Undying Hex to close in on Master Cloud Lightning with incredible speed.

Master Cloud Lightning was wailing inwardly, but had few options at his disposal. He could only steel himself, and draw further upon his longevity to try to escape.

And thus, the two of them sped through the desert in a deadly chase.

Before long, half a day had gone by, and evening was falling. Bai Xiaochun was amazed by how things were going.

“So the old guy is fast, I can accept that. But how can he keep it up for so long?” Bai Xiaochun had always thought himself to be fast, so it was nothing less than shocking to find that Master Cloud Lightning was actually outdoing him.

Bai Xiaochun had his Undying Hex, but that could only give him bursts of speed. It was the same with the Mountain Shaking Bash.

The only thing he had been left which he still hadn’t used was the Godkiller.

He only had a few drops of Undying Blood, and every time he used the Godkiller, he would lose one. As far as he was concerned, each of those drops of blood was as valuable as a deva soul.

And it was impossible to say whether or not Master Cloud Lightning’s soul would count as a complete deva soul.

Were anyone else chasing Master Cloud Lightning, that person

would already have given up. But after some thought, Bai Xiaochun snorted and thought, “Maybe I can’t kill him, but I can scare him to death. I refuse to believe that he can flee like this for so long without wasting a bunch of energy.”

Having reached this point in his train of thought, he shouted, “Hey, you old punk. Better use a trump card now, or you’re dead!”

Then he used his Undying Hex and Mountain Shaking Bash to accelerate dramatically.

Master Cloud Lightning had built up a bit of distance between the two of them, but when he heard what Bai Xiaochun had just shouted, and saw that distance being eaten up, he bit down on his already mangled tongue, spitting out some blood to build up more speed.

However, as soon as he did that, Bai Xiaochun slowed down.

Realizing that he had been played, Master Cloud Lightning grumbled angrily, then gritted his teeth and continued onward.

However... how could Bai Xiaochun end things so casually? He suddenly let out a shout as if he were about to accelerate, which immediately pushed Master Cloud Lightning closer to the brink of madness.

However, he didn’t accelerate. Then, moments later, he did. Slowly but surely, Master Cloud Lightning was being driven insane. After all, whether Bai Xiaochun accelerated or not, every time he shouted, Master Cloud Lightning had no choice but to use his secret magic.

Before long, the man’s hair was white, and his face was covered with wrinkles.

“How could this Bai Xiaochun be so difficult to deal with?” he despaired. “If things keep going on like this, he’ll kill me without even having to catch up to me!!” Finally, he slapped his bag of holding and began throwing random things out left and right in

the hopes of distracting Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was delighted by this development, and felt prouder of himself than ever. After all, he was so awesome... that his enemies resorted to throwing random magical items out in the hopes of slowing him down.

“This is definitely the ultimate level of giving chase. Nothing tops this!” Sighing, he began to collect the random items. Finally, distance began to build up between the two of them, and Master Cloud Lightning sighed in relief.

And yet, despite the distance being built up, Bai Xiaochun was still chasing him, and therefore, he didn’t dare to stop using his secret magic....

“He's still not giving up! What’s the big deal? I just ambushed him, that’s all! And it didn’t even work! Devas do that kind of thing to each other all the time!” Master Cloud Lightning felt like he might collapse mentally at any moment. As of now... he deeply regretted provoking the heaven-damned Bai Xiaochun.

At the same time, he used a different secret magic to try to make contact with the other Master Cloud Lightning. Unfortunately, his other half was too far away to provide any help.

Chapter 930: Hi There, Little Fei

Three days passed in a flash. The distance between Master Cloud Lightning and Bai Xiaochun continued to grow. Eventually, they were nearing the border of the desert area.

Master Cloud Lightning's mood continued to sink, and he cursed constantly in his heart. His hair was now so white, and his skin so full of wrinkles, that it seemed likely he had lost an entire sixty-year-cycle of longevity during the last three days alone.

The mere thought of all that longevity caused Master Cloud Lightning to slip further into madness.

“Three days! This guy has been chasing me for three whole days!” Master Cloud Lightning's hair was disheveled, and his eyes completely bloodshot. The longer he fled, the worse off he was. And yet, Bai Xiaochun's regenerative capabilities made it so that taking part in this protracted chase wasn't difficult at all for him.

Master Cloud Lightning felt like weeping, and yet, had no choice but to continue running away.

Bai Xiaochun knew that he wouldn't be able to catch up, but hoped to instill even more fear into Master Cloud Lightning's heart, and also force him to waste as much energy as possible.

“It's too bad Chen Hetian didn't come along. This would be the perfect situation to vent on him a bit.” Sighing, he prepared to shoot forward with another burst of speed, when all of a sudden, his expression flickered. Just now, he had noticed a familiar figure within the range of his divine sense.

Other than Master Cloud Lightning and some corpses, he hadn't seen anyone for several days, so he was immediately delighted.

As he got closer, and he confirmed the identity of this newcomer, his delight grew, and he even shifted directions to head in their direction.

Before long, five people came into view, speeding along near the border of the desert.

Among those five... was Du Lingfei!

Her four companions all wore the garb of special guards. Three of them flew in defensive positions, scanning everything in the area for signs of danger. As for the fourth, he was a young man who seemed ordinary in every aspect, and yet flew very close to Du Lingfei.

Although Bai Xiaochun still wasn't quite sure how he felt about Du Lingfei, the fact that he had suddenly run into fellow cultivators after so many lonesome days ensured that he was still very happy.

Just when he was about to call out a greeting, Du Lingfei's group noticed him. As for the young man who was in position next to Du Lingfei, he merely glanced over, and then looked away indifferently.

A smile broke out on Bai Xiaochun's face. The truth was that he was getting tired of scaring Master Cloud Lightning. Reaching up with his right hand, he waved enthusiastically in greeting.

A look of surprise flitted across Du Lingfei's face. Then, she seemed to suddenly recall something, and cast a surreptitious glance at the young man positioned next to her.

Bai Xiaochun noticed that, and looked at the young man in surprise. As soon as he looked at him closely, he didn't like what he saw.

The young man was very good-looking, with sword-like eyebrows and eyes that shone as brightly as stars. Based on his energy fluctuations, his cultivation base was in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage. And yet somehow, he seemed to be on somewhat intimate terms with Du Lingfei.

The fact that Du Lingfei's first reaction was to glance at that

young man caused a prickly sensation to rise up in Bai Xiaochun's heart, which he suppressed with a cold snort. After all, this young man was in the Nascent Soul stage, while he himself was a deva. The young man might be good-looking, but he obviously couldn't compare to him.

Suddenly feeling very confident, he flew over to Du Lingfei's group.

"Hey, boo!" he called out in a loud voice. "You know, this desert is a really dangerous place. If you plan to cross it, you need to be very careful. Besides, I've been all over the place, and didn't find an exit of any kind."

The three special guards with Du Lingfei all clasped hands respectfully toward him upon his approach. After all, even as Heavenspan Island special guards, they still had to show respect to devas.

However, the young man who seemed to be so close to Du Lingfei didn't react at all. He didn't so much as look at Bai Xiaochun, much less clasp hands in formal greeting.

Bai Xiaochun hadn't been too pleased with him to begin with, and was even less pleased by the treatment this young man was giving him now.

However, he was worried about possible misunderstandings, so he decided to probe for a bit of information. "Who's this, boo? Your brother? He seems familiar for some reason."

Du Lingfei hesitated slightly. Glancing subconsciously at the young man, she looked back at Bai Xiaochun, shook her head, and said, "Just be on your way, Bai Xiaochun. You never know where the exit to this trial by fire might be. I hope that you can find it and win all the rewards."

Bai Xiaochun was a bit taken aback by the strange tone of Du Lingfei's voice. Just when he was about to inquire further, the

young man spoke up.

“Let’s go,” he said, and then proceeded forward. Du Lingfei hesitated for a moment, then chose to follow along. She even reached out, touched the young man’s arm, and quietly offered some sort of explanation to him. The other three special guards fanned out into defensive positions as they began to move.

Bai Xiaochun’s anger from before had not yet died down, and now Du Lingfei was acting intimate with this young man right in front of him?

“I can’t believe this is happening right in front of my own eyes!” he thought. At this point, he gave up on any effort to hold back. Heart feeling even more prickly than before, he looked up in thought for a moment. Then his expression brightened, and he hurried after the group of five.

Pointing at the young man, he exclaimed, “Eee! Hey, I remember now! You’re... you’re Little Fei from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, aren’t you!?”

Du Lingfei’s expression flickered, and the young man’s brow furrowed as he looked over coldly at Bai Xiaochun.

“Get out of here, Xiaochun!” Du Lingfei said. “He’s not the Little Fei you’re thinking about!”

“Huh? Wait, did I really mistake him for the wrong person?” Hurrying forward, he looked the young man up and down a bit more carefully. Then, he gave a wry smile and gestured for them to continue on their way.

“Sorry about that. I guess I really mistook you for someone else....”

In response, the young man remained as expressionless as ever as he said, “Well, if you really mistook--”

However, before he could say anything else, Bai Xiaochun lunged forward and smacked him directly across the side of the head.

It happened so quickly, and so unexpectedly, that neither Du Lingfei, the three special guards, nor the young man himself could even react.

Bai Xiaochun's movement was smooth and skilled, as though he had a lot of practice doing this type of thing, which was true, considering how many times he had slapped a demigod. Even as the smacking sound rang out, everyone looked over at him in astonishment.

Du Lingfei gasped, and the young man, who had just been interrupted right in the middle of his sentence, stared at Bai Xiaochun in shock. Never could he have guessed that Bai Xiaochun would do something like that, nor that he would accomplish it with such utter smoothness.

For this young man, it was a unique set of circumstances. His reaction speed was slower than normal, and therefore, the slap hit him with perfect accuracy....

“Hahaha! Are you still going to pretend you're not Little Fei? I'd recognize the feeling of slapping you in any circumstance! Little Fei, it's me! Xiaochun! We're good friends, remember!?” Although Bai Xiaochun kept a delighted expression on his face, inside, he was shocked. His slap had landed just as expected, but how could he have ever guessed... that it would hurt his hand so much?

“This guy is definitely not a Nascent Soul cultivator,” he thought. “What's his head made of anyway!?”

By this point, the young man was beginning to pant, and was staring at Bai Xiaochun with icy coldness. There also seemed to be a shocking pressure rolling off of him that he couldn't control.

Du Lingfei's face had drained of blood. Grabbing the young man's arm, she began to pull him away.

“What do you think you're doing, Bai Xiaochun!?” she said. “Why are you being so rude? He said he's not Little Fei! You're

mistaking him for someone else! Get out of here!” She blinked at him meaningfully as she dragged the young man away.

Bai Xiaochun could tell that something was very off, and was already starting to come up with an idea of what exactly it was.

“Uh... I guess I really did confuse you with someone else. Aiya! My apologies! A real case of mistaken identity, I guess....” As he turned away, he glanced at the young man out of the corner of his eye, and suddenly, his heart trembled as he thought back to the stinging sensation he had felt when slapping him. That head seemed even harder than the Giant Ghost King’s....

Chapter 931: He Couldnt Be The Celestial, Could He?

“Who is that guy?” That was what Bai Xiaochun was thinking as Du Lingfei and her group left. His hand still hurt from delivering that slap.

It was only now that he realized that the energy passageways in his hand seemed dangerously close to collapsing.

“Don’t tell me he’s a demigod? But demigod’s aren’t that tough. Besides, I’m a deva now.... Wait, could he possibly be... the Celestial?!?! Did he slip into the trial by fire to check out the trial-takers first-hand, and see who would be a good apprentice?” The mere thought caused him to shiver with fear.

“Impossible. If he were really the Celestial, then why was it so easy to slap him...? Also, if he were really the Celestial, wouldn’t he have exterminated me instantaneously?” After putting some more thought into it, he calmed down a bit, and told himself that he was overreacting, and that the young man couldn’t possibly have been the Celestial.

Either way, he realized that his actions before had been too impulsive....

Sighing, he turned and made his way off in a different direction. A few days later, he had left the desert, and was staring out at a seemingly endless swamp.

The ground was made up of either sludge, or puddles of bubbling water. When those bubbles popped, they released turbid mist that swirled in the area.

As a result, even the sky above the swamp was overcast and murky.

He hesitated before entering the swamp; something about it seemed very odd, and the entire place fairly thrummed with vile

fluctuations. He immediately felt the need to be more on guard than ever.

“This trial by fire is completely bizarre.” He thought about trying to go around it, but the desert was dangerous in its own way, so in the end, he proceeded forward.

At the same time, he continued to send out messages with his transmission jade slip. In terms of his own safety, he wasn't too worried. As long as he was careful, he should be fine. But he couldn't stop thinking about Big Fatty Zhang, Hou Xiaomei, and his other friends. Every day that they were in the trial by fire alone meant more danger for them.

He proceeded through the swamp with the utmost caution, and as a result, didn't encounter any risks to his life. Before long, half a month had gone by.

He did see some dangerous situations. For example, he saw a flock of vicious-looking birds flying in the air. Moments later, an entire horde of leeches shot up into the air and ate the birds alive.

He saw tiny larvae swimming in the swamp water, and also saw seven or eight corpses....

Once he saw a huge spider, fully 300 meters tall. It glared at him, but could sense that he was not worth provoking, and eventually sank back down into the waters of the swamp.

“This place could be completely deadly to someone in the Nascent Soul stage!” Even as he proceeded along, his mood sinking, he faced the first truly life-threatening situation.

A huge, rotten hand burst out of the water like the hand of a giant. Rotten flesh and chunks of coagulated blood flew off of it as it rocketed with lightning speed toward Bai Xiaochun.

If it had only been a hand, it might not have been as shocking. But an arm followed the hand, and it was only by drawing upon significant fleshly body power, his Undying Hex, and his newly

acquire flying shuttle that he was able to extricate himself from the danger.

After reaching safety, a defiant howl echoed through the swamp behind him.

“Forget the Nascent Soul stage. This place is even dangerous for devas!” His nervousness and anxiety continued to mount. In the following days, he ran into some other cultivators from the four rivers. Only a few were from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. However, so long as they weren’t from the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect, he would still help them as best he could.

They were always profoundly grateful, and he would always ask them about Big Fatty Zhang and his other friends. He would even show them pictures he had stored in jade slips.

Finally, after relentlessly asking everyone the same questions, he finally found someone who gave him a clue about Big Fatty Zhang!

“Senior Bai, I saw that person about two days ago. It was to the west of here, and I’m pretty sure that Master Lightning Origin from the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect was chasing him!”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes immediately began to glitter with cold light.

“Two days ago... to the west....” After expressing his thanks, he sped off as fast as he could to the west, sending repeated messages to Big Fatty Zhang along the way.

As a deva, Bai Xiaochun could move much more quickly than a Nascent Soul cultivator. Sonic booms stretched out behind him as he shot through the swamp.

Not being exactly certain of where Big Fatty Zhang had been, or where he was heading as he was chased, his only option was to search blindly.

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Big Fatty Zhang was in an area not too far from Bai Xiaochun,

huffing and puffing as he sped along, picking leeches off of himself as he went, which was a very painful process.

At the moment, he didn't dare to fly in the air. After being teleported here, things had started out safe enough. With the residual power his Will Core had provided to his nascent soul, he had been able to evade any major dangers.

Unfortunately, his actions had attracted the attention of Master Lightning Origin, who mistakenly believed him to be in possession of some extraordinary magical item. No matter how Big Fatty Zhang had attempted to explain himself, Master Lightning Origin didn't believe him.

Master Lightning Origin's cultivation base was much higher than his, plus he was accompanied by two other cultivators from the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect. Just when it seemed like they had been about to catch up with him, he had taken to running on foot through the swamp, and thus escaped them.

Unfortunately, running through the swamp caused countless leeches and other vicious entities to swarm him. Thankfully, his Will Core power kept him mostly safe, although he still ended up getting injured, and was still in danger because of Master Lightning Origin and his companions, who continued to give chase by flying through the air.

It was now the third day of the chase, and Big Fatty Zhang was starting to lose hope. He was tired, his eyes were bloodshot with fury, and his cultivation base was teetering unstably. He was almost out of energy.

Furthermore, things were made more difficult by the fact that he didn't want to fly through the air higher up, and thus had to brave the dangers of the swamp. On more than a few occasions, he had nearly been killed by leeches....

"What the hell kind of place is this? And what's the deal with that Master Lightning Origin!? He's such a bully!!" Big Fatty Zhang

was infuriated, but had no options at his disposal. As he fled, he would occasionally try to send messages to fellow cultivators from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

He was reaching his limit. If it weren't for the fact that his pursuers didn't want to go down into the swamp to find him, he would likely already have died.

Furthermore, none of the messages he had transmitted had received any responses.

He was like an oil lamp sputtering on the verge of going out. Chuckling bitterly, he realized that his speculations had been off, and that he likely wouldn't make it out of this trial by fire alive.

However, that was when a tremor passed through him. His Will Core intuition was telling him that a profoundly powerful entity was making its way through the swamp toward him, and that it was only about 3,000 meters away.

From what he could tell, this newcomer seemed like a deva, which meant... that he had no chance of surviving!

“Well, if I'm going to die, I'll take some of them with me!” Eyes flickering with madness, he shot up into the air, which was right about the time that the monkey-like Master Lightning Origin approached, flanked by two other cultivators wearing northern-style robes.

At the same time, the air several hundred meters away rippled as a 300-meter-tall spider suddenly reared up from within the swamp!

Master Lightning Origin and his companions were clearly shocked, and prepared to flee. As for Big Fatty Zhang, he was just about to try to block their path when, all of a sudden, the transmission jade slip in his bag of holding vibrated.

“Where are you, Eldest Brother?!?!”

Big Fatty Zhang's jaw dropped. Facing this sudden chance to escape, he ignored Master Lightning Origin and his companions,

threw his head back, and roared at the top of his lungs.

“Help me, Xiaochun!!”

His cry echoed out into the ears of Bai Xiaochun, who was some distance away. Stopping in place, he jerked to face the direction of the sound. Then, energy surging, he shot like a lightning bolt in that direction. The will of the heavens stirred, and a huge version of his face appeared in the sky as he closed in on Big Fatty Zhang!

Chapter 932: Are You Egging Me On?

When Bai Xiaochun's face appeared up in the air, the Master Cloud Lightning whom Bai Xiaochun had not yet encountered happened to be flying along through the swamp in another location, his expression very grim.

When he sensed the deva fluctuations rolling out, his eyes flashed with cold light.

He was essentially the older brother of the twin Master Cloud Lightnings, who had once existed as one person with one body. Although a cultivation accident had split them into two, their minds were still connected, and they could communicate with each other via a secret magic.

The older brother already knew about everything which had occurred between Bai Xiaochun and his other half. As the fight had been playing out, he was in the plains area, separated from the desert by the swamp.

At that time, he had been too far away to be of any help, but had immediately begun to race toward the desert. Now that he was here in the swamp, and had suddenly detected Bai Xiaochun's aura, he called out to his younger brother via their secret magic.

"Bai Xiaochun is in the swamp! Hurry over, and we can fuse together and kill him!"

The younger of the twin Master Cloud Lightnings was just about to leave the swamp and enter the plains. However, upon receiving the message, his eyes flashed angrily, and he turned and headed back into the swamp.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was shooting like a meteor toward Big Fatty Zhang.

Because they hadn't been very far apart to begin with, his aura was already able to descend on the area around Big Fatty Zhang.

As it did, the huge spider that had just risen up suddenly shivered. From the look in its eyes, it apparently viewed Big Fatty Zhang as being special for some reason. Ignoring the pressure from Bai Xiaochun, it leaped into the air, howling as it shot toward Big Fatty Zhang.

Shocked, Master Lightning Origin and his companions fell back. However, before they could move very far, the spider shot out several strands of black silk, which wrapped around the entire group. Blood sprayed out of Big Fatty Zhang's mouth as he was then dragged down into the waters of the swamp.

Master Lightning Origin and his companions reacted with utter despair, and struggled to free themselves, but were unable. Just like Big Fatty Zhang, they were dragged down. At the same time, black mist began to pulse on all of their faces. From the way it wriggled and writhed, it almost looked like they were covered with black spiders.

Big Fatty Zhang was the weakest of the group, and was the most adversely affected. He immediately passed out, whereas the more powerful cultivation bases of Master Lightning Origin and his companions enabled them to fight back a bit longer.

As the spider sank down into the swamp and dragged Big Fatty Zhang and the others with it, a sound like heavenly thunder burst through the air. Bai Xiaochun's enraged face appeared up above, and shouted, "How dare you!!"

The swamp below immediately sank down because of the pressure, revealing Big Fatty Zhang and the others.

As for the huge spider, it shivered and tried to escape.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun's expression distorted as he transformed into a beam of light that shot down toward the depression in the swamp.

At the moment, Bai Xiaochun wasn't thinking at all about

conserving spiritual energy or the power of his fleshly body. Waving his hand, he sent his flying shuttle whooshing out in front of him.

The shuttle sent the swamp water shooting out in all directions, simultaneously destroying countless leeches and larvae. By this point, Big Fatty Zhang and the other captives were completely out in the open, albeit tied up with black silk.

Without any hesitation, he grabbed the silk attached to Big Fatty Zhang and yanked him upward. That in turn caused the huge spider to be pulled up out of the swamp, to hang in midair.

The spider stared at him with hateful, crimson eyes. Aware that it couldn't escape, it sprayed a huge amount of black silk at him.

“Have a death wish?!” Bai Xiaochun shouted angrily. Back before he had arrived, it might have made sense for the spider to ignore him. But now that he had unleashed the power of his cultivation base, it made sense for the spider to give up on its prey. And yet, it went beyond that and attacked him.

Bai Xiaochun was not happy at all that it had tried to take Big Fatty Zhang away so forcefully, and the matter was even worse considering the black spider marks on Big Fatty Zhang's face, which were clearly venomous. Although many people would be unable to assess such a bizarre poison, as a grandmaster of the Dao of medicine, Bai Xiaochun instantly realized that it was a type of venom which affected the soul!

And its function... was to kill the host!

Eyes flashing with cold light, Bai Xiaochun performed an incantation gesture, sending his flying shuttle forth to sever the silk threads that bound Big Fatty Zhang.

At this point, the image of a crescent moon appeared in one of Bai Xiaochun's eyes. He was well aware that there were many entities in this swamp that should not be provoked, and that if a fight

broke out, it needed to be ended quickly. Therefore, he called upon... the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation!

The first level of the incantation involved summoning a moon. At the moment, he had cultivated the technique to the point where he could summon a partial moon. As he utilized the technique, a shocking crescent moon appeared up in the sky.

Moonlight instantly spilled down in astonishing fashion, causing all of the lands to turn silver.

When that light touched the black spider silk, it melted away. A look of shock and terror appeared on the spider's face, and it tried to sink down further into the swamp. However, it was too slow! An image of a moon had already appeared on its back!

"Fallen Moon!" Bai Xiaochun growled. Brilliant light shot down from the moon onto the spider, causing the moon mark on its back to expand rapidly. An agonized shriek could be heard from the spider as the moon symbol dug deep into it. The spider trembled, and then green, viscous fluid began to seep out from inside of it. Then, even as it hoped to try to escape into the swamp, it exploded!

It had been destroyed in body and soul!

Only when the spider died did the black marks on Big Fatty Zhang and the other cultivators vanish.

Master Lightning Origin and his three companions had not yet lost consciousness, so they were able to see everything which had just happened. When they saw the traces of the venom vanish, they immediately turned and fled in three different directions, their faces as ashen as death.

Never could any of them have imagined that chasing Big Fatty Zhang would end with a deva patriarch from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect coming over in a fury.

"You pick on my Eldest Brother and then think you can just leave?" There was no way Bai Xiaochun would simply let them

escape. Pulling the still unconscious Big Fatty Zhang with him, he took a step forward and waved his finger, sending the flying shuttle shooting toward the first of the three cultivators from the north.

A scream echoed out as, in the blink of an eye, the shuttle stabbed through the man, and then headed toward the second. After cutting down the second, it shot at high speed toward Master Lightning Origin.

It was in this very moment that the enormous face of Master Cloud Lightning appeared up above in the sky.

“Do you dare, Bai Xiaochun?!?!”

Bai Xiaochun was not surprised at all at the sudden appearance of Master Cloud Lightning, and in fact, had detected his impending arrival earlier. However, in his urgency to save Big Fatty Zhang, he had ignored him. Now, he glared up at the face and said, “Are you egging me on or something?! I absolutely hate it when people egg me on!”

Without any hesitation, he sent the flying shuttle shooting forward with greater speed.

Even if the monkey-like Master Lightning Origin had been more nimble, he wouldn't have been able to dodge out of the way. Expression that of despair, he shrieked, “Master, save--”

Before he could finish speaking, the flying shuttle stabbed through his forehead.

Bai Xiaochun hadn't set out with the intention of killing these people. However, their actions would have led to Big Fatty Zhang's death if he hadn't come to save him in the nick of time.

The sight of his apprentice being killed caused Master Cloud Lightning to howl, “Bai Xiaochun!!”

His face swirled together into a beam of light that shot directly toward Bai Xiaochun with deadly, destructive power!

Chapter 933: You're Doing This On Purpose

If Heavenspan Island was the imperial palace, and the Celestial was the emperor, then the demigod patriarchs from the riversource sects would be analogous to the four heavenly kings, such as the Giant Ghost King.

As such, Bai Xiaochun and Master Cloud Lightning were like two powerful subordinates of two heavenly kings. Although they were technically on the same side, in truth... there was enough tension between them to lead to deadly conflict. On the outside, the demigod patriarchs would ensure that their followers didn't get into conflicts such as the current one.

But inside a trial by fire like this, where deaths were expected, then even if one killed the other, they could easily explain it away after leaving.

Master Cloud Lightning had been forced to simply watch as Bai Xiaochun pushed his other half to near destruction. Then, that same person went on to personally kill his apprentice.

Because of these grievances both old and new, Master Cloud Lightning was furious. As he supplanted heavenly will with his own, the huge face in the sky began to send crushing pressure down.

Master Cloud Lightning howled at the top of his lungs, shooting through the air toward Bai Xiaochun with such shocking speed that lightning bolts began to rise up around him!

It only took the blink of an eye for more than 100,000 lightning bolts to build up, making it seem as if the entire world had become a world of lightning, with Master Cloud Lightning as its sovereign!

Bai Xiaochun's pupils constricted. He could immediately tell that this Master Cloud Lightning was much stronger than the other he had faced. Both were in the mid Deva Realm, but the one from

before had apparently just made his breakthrough. The one he faced now seemed to have been in the mid Deva Realm for quite some time, and was actually very close to stepping into the late realm.

From that, Bai Xiaochun could tell that single-handedly dealing with this version of Master Cloud Lightning would be similar to handling someone even more powerful than Chen Hetian, Li Xiandao or Bai Zhentian.

In fact... this was the most powerful enemy he had ever faced in the Heavenspan region!

There was no time for thinking or planning. Bai Xiaochun shot backward, throwing the unconscious Big Fatty Zhang into his bag of holding. Even as he did, tens upon tens of thousands of heavenly lightning bolts slammed into the spot he had just occupied.

As heaven and earth shook violently, the enraged Master Cloud Lightning performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, causing the heavenly lightning to begin to compress and converge on in his hand in the form of an enormous bow!

“Time to die!!” he howled, pulling back on the bowstring, which caused an arrow of blackish-violet lightning to form. This was no magical item; it was a divine ability unique to Master Cloud Lightning. Thunder crackled as a supremely destructive power began to build up, and then pierced through the air toward Bai Xiaochun.

All of this takes a bit of time to describe, but actually took place in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. Bai Xiaochun didn't seem worried at all. Not only did he not regret killing Master Lightning Origin, his wrath was now completely focused on Master Cloud Lightning.

“You really think I'm afraid of you, fool?!” he shouted. Although he feared death, after all of the things he had experienced in life, he had come to know that now was the type of situation in which

to put his poor little life on the line!

If he didn't, then it would surely be lost....

Instead of backing up, he advanced, waving his hands out in front of him as he barked, “Living Mountain Incantation!”

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Countless rocks and bits of rubble shot forth to adhere to his body. In the blink of an eye, he had transformed into a 300-meter-tall stone golem.

Bursting with energy, he clenched his hand into a fist and punched out, landing a blow directly on the blackish-violet arrow of lightning.

Intense rumbling sounds echoed out as, at the same time, the enormous face of Bai Xiaochun slammed into the enormous face of Master Cloud Lightning. As the ground quaked violently, the blackish-violet lightning arrow collapsed, and cracks spread out over Bai Xiaochun’s Living Mountain Incantation form.

In the end, the arrow was no match, and was destroyed, allowing Bai Xiaochun in stone golem form to continue on toward Master Cloud Lightning.

Master Cloud Lightning took a deep breath, and cold light flashed in his eyes. Waving his left hand out in front of him, he gritted his teeth and said, “Cloud Lightning Forefather: First Transformation!”

Almost instantly, Master Cloud Lightning’s body began to twitch and writhe, almost as though snakes were dancing about beneath his skin. A vicious expression gripped his face, and he let out a howl like that of a wild beast.

At the same time, he began to grow larger, until he was fully 30 meters tall. No longer did the right and left halves of his body look so disparate. Although one side was burlier and more filled in than the other, he looked much more proportional.

At the same time, his aura transformed, filling with an explosive energy that made him seem at least three times as strong as before!

Shockingly, a red halo of light sprang up to surround his person, which was clearly a powerful defensive ability.

After completing his transformation, Master Cloud Lightning looked up, and both of his mismatched eyes were bright red. Radiating madness and animal ferocity, he lunged toward Bai Xiaochun's stone golem form.

Bai Xiaochun was so startled that his eyes nearly popped out of his skull.

“He can actually shapeshift!! And this is just the first transformation? That must mean there’s a second and a third.... Dammit! There’s nothing I hate more than fighting shapeshifters!” However, now was not the time to ponder the situation. Eyes burning with ferocity, he jumped forward to meet his enemy’s attack.

“I’ll fight you so fast and hard you won’t be able to transform a second time!” Utilizing the Mountain Shaking Bash to accelerate rapidly, he shot toward Master Cloud Lightning.

When they collided, a massive boom rocked all heaven and earth. The shockwave sent water flying up everywhere in the swamp, and caused numerous creatures to flee in all directions. Nothing dared to get close to Master Cloud Lightning and Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun’s stone golem form was significantly damaged, but at the same time, the red halo surrounding Master Cloud Lightning was about to collapse. Blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth as he staggered backward from the force of Bai Xiaochun’s attack.

“I can’t believe this guy got so strong after transforming!” Bai Xiaochun thought, his qi and blood churning madly inside of him. However, he continued to press the attack. As for Master Cloud Lightning, he looked up, his hands flashing in a double-handed

incantation gesture.

“Cloud Lightning Forefather: Second Transformation!!”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyelids twitched as Master Cloud Lightning again grew larger. Now he was 60 meters tall, and his body looked even more symmetrical than before! Furthermore, he was three times as strong again!

This time, instead of a red halo surrounding him, it was orange! This level of defense left Bai Xiaochun stunned.

“Another transformation?” Not only was Master Cloud Lightning much more powerful, but it was very irritating to Bai Xiaochun that, despite what he had said moments ago about not providing an opportunity for a second transformation, Master Cloud Lightning had gone and done just that.

“Well, you won’t get an opportunity for a third transformation!” he shouted. Even as he prepared to attack, Master Cloud Lightning spoke in a loud voice.

“Cloud Lightning Forefather: Third Transformation!

“Cloud Lightning Forefather: Fourth Transformation!!

“Cloud Lightning Forefather: Fifth Transformation!!!”

Chapter 934: What Divine Ability Is That?!

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

It was impossible to determine whether he intentionally did it in response to Bai Xiaochun's words. Either way, Master Cloud Lightning transformed several times in a row, causing intense, thunderous rumbling to echo out as he grew from a height of 60 meters to 90 meters.

Then, he went from 90 meters to 120 meters, and finally 150 meters. Although the two halves of his body were not perfectly symmetrical, they now matched much better than before.

His surging energy had reached a shocking level, and as he hovered there in the air, he actually looked like the forefather of all humanity, burly and tough, emanating intense pressure that would shake the minds of anyone who could sense it. Clearly, this version of Master Cloud Lightning was vastly more powerful than before.

Furthermore, he was surrounded by a glittering shield of light that was so dazzling that it seemed... completely impenetrable!

Bai Xiaochun was stunned.... And he was also convinced that Master Cloud Lightning had intentionally transformed multiple times in a row to mock him.

"It's time for you to die, Bai Xiaochun!" Master Cloud Lightning shouted in a voice that shook all heaven and earth.

Bai Xiaochun shivered, his eyes crimson from the humiliation he had just suffered, and his rage mounting by the second.

"You're pushing things too far, Master Cloud Lightning. If you can do all that shapeshifting, why not do it all from the start? There was no need to wait until now and then intentionally humiliate me!" Without any warning at all, he launched into the Throat Crushing Grasp, backed by the Mountain Shaking Bash.

In the blink of an eye, he was blasting forward with lightning speed. He even used the Undying Hex, adding more speed, and placing him directly in front of Master Cloud Lightning.

A thump sounded out as the Throat Crushing Grasp landed on the multicolored shield of light surrounding Master Cloud Lightning. Then, indescribable force shot back into Bai Xiaochun's arm, like a wave of power that completely destroyed the power of the Throat Crushing Grasp!

He actually pierced through three layers of the shield, only to be stopped by the fourth.

In almost the same moment, Master Cloud Lightning attacked in quick and violent fashion. He waved his arms, causing numerous lightning bolts to shoot out, which transformed into silver snakes that slammed into Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun's stone golem form couldn't stand up to the force, and collapsed, sending countless bits of rubble and rock showering out in all directions. Even as Bai Xiaochun's true form was revealed, the lightning bolts lashed toward him.

Shaken by how perilous the situation was already, Bai Xiaochun quickly performed a double-handed incantation gesture and then waved his hand out in front of him. Frigid qi exploded out, and nine frigid projections appeared, which leaped to intercept the lightning. Bai Xiaochun didn't retreat by even a step; he currently wasn't really thinking, and was acting on fighting instinct alone. Ignoring the lightning, he took a step forward, and simultaneously clenched his right hand into a fist!

A black hole sprang up that sucked in all of his aura, all of his qi and blood, all signs of life. His body twisted and distorted, withering in bizarre fashion.

He was unleashing... the Undying Emperor's Fist!

The intense pressure that suddenly weighed down on the area

caused Master Cloud Lightning's face to fall. Panting, he gave up on any thoughts of fighting, and began to back up as quickly as possible.

Even as he began to move, intense rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth as a huge, shadowy figure appeared behind Bai Xiaochun. He wore imperial robes and an imperial crown, and seemed to be looking down condescendingly on all creation.

Master Cloud Lightning's heart began to pound, and his mind spun. The shield of light around him flickered as he sped away, and yet, his retreat had begun too late....

The fist struck!

A projection of Bai Xiaochun's face filled the sky, and a paramount energy spread out. Rumbling filled heaven and earth, and all of the lightning bolts which had surrounded him shattered into pieces!

The image of a fist appeared, an image which caused Master Cloud Lightning's mind to be overtaken by madness. Crushing all the lightning in its path, it sped forward and then slammed into the multicolored shield!

The shield was capable of rebuffing Bai Xiaochun's Living Mountain Incantation, even when combined with the Mountain Shaking Bash and the Throat Crushing Grasp. But... it was incapable of standing up to a quintuple-power Undying Emperor's Fist!

A massive boom echoed out as the shield shattered into bits! Then, the fist went on to smash into Master Cloud Lightning, sending him tumbling backward like a kite with its string cut, blood spraying out of his mouth. As he flew backward, he shrank from his previous 150-meter height down to 120 meters.

Apparently, that was his only way of standing up to the domineering, destructive power of Bai Xiaochun's Undying

Emperor's Fist.

And yet, that wasn't enough! As Master Cloud Lightning skidded to a halt, he coughed up another mouthful of blood, simultaneously shrinking from a height of 120 meters down to 90 meters. Then he coughed up a third mouthful of blood... and shrank to 60 meters, 30 meters... and then returned to his original size! Finally, he coughed up a fifth mouthful of blood! It took all of that to survive Bai Xiaochun's Undying Emperor's Fist!

300 meters away, he finally righted himself and looked up, eyes flickering with venom. Then, he chuckled coldly.

"That was what I was waiting for. The fist strike my other half described.... Very strong indeed. But... not strong enough to kill me. Next... I'm going to combine with my other half. When that happens, Bai Xiaochun... you're dead!" His eyes flickered as he snorted coldly, then suddenly shot away with a spectacular burst of speed.

He left some divine sense behind though, apparently waiting for a response from Bai Xiaochun. He was also prepared for a situation in which Bai Xiaochun started to chase him. However, he was confident in making him regret such a decision by severely injuring him with another trump card.

"Based on what my other half told me," he thought, "if he gives chase, he'll be doing so in a severely weakened state.... In that case, I might not even need to combine with my other half to kill him!" Even as he plotted about what to do next, Bai Xiaochun heard the words he had uttered moments ago, and his pupils constricted.

This version of Master Cloud Lightning was far stronger than the last one he had faced. Therefore, it was easy to imagine what level of cultivation base and battle prowess he would achieve by combining. He would definitely be very difficult for Bai Xiaochun to deal with.

His best option was to end the fight right now.

Just when he was about to start moving, though, he hesitated. “Did he say that on purpose to try to trick me?”

But then, his eyes shone with determination.

“Even if it’s a trick, I still need to do something. I can’t give him a chance to combine with his other half!” Considering what type of enemy he was facing, he knew that he only had one option, no matter how much it pained him to resort to it. Without the slightest hesitation, he locked down on one of his drops of Undying Blood, and then used the method described in the Undying Codex... to crush it!

As the Undying Blood shattered, a shocking blood qi erupted, filling his entire body. A red mist surrounded him as... he felt himself accelerating at rapid speed.

At the same time, his current state allowed him to rapidly absorb the energy of heaven and earth in the area, turning him into something like a black hole that could absorb all living things.

The air around him distorted and cracked, and at the same time, his energy surged. Master Cloud Lightning nearly let out a shriek of terror. Trembling, he realized that the sensation of deadly crisis which was rising inside of him vastly surpassed what he had felt when facing the Undying Emperor’s Fist.

“What divine ability is that? Dammit! That fist strike of his actually wasn’t his trump card!!” Master Cloud Lightning felt like every inch of him was screaming in terror. There was no time for thought or planning. Even as Bai Xiaochun closed in, surrounded by swirling red mist, Master Cloud Lightning drew upon every ounce of energy he could muster to flee in the opposite direction!

At the same time, Bai Xiaochun looked up at him. His eyes were red, almost like blood. He looked completely different from before, a vicious predator... whose eyes shone with bloodthirsty light!

Chapter 935: Godkiller

When Bai Xiaochun looked up, it was as if the entire world had turned the color of blood. Waves began to roll out across the water that made up the swamp, and the countless entities which lived within it sensed Bai Xiaochun's aura, and instinctively began to tremble!

Master Cloud Lightning's heart was racing faster than it ever had in his entire life, and his mind was spinning in terror.

"Dammit, how could this Bai Xiaochun be so strong!?!?" he howled in his heart. "He's not in the early Deva Realm!!"

All of a sudden, he realized how arrogant he had been, and cursed his decision to anger Bai Xiaochun. Even worse was his childish decision not to flee when he could have.

He felt like slapping himself in the face over and over again, and yet, all he could do was try to flee at top speed.

It was in that moment that Bai Xiaochun looked up. Because of the red mist which surrounded him, it was impossible for anyone to see his blood-red eyes clearly.

And the voice with which he spoke almost didn't seem to be his own....

"God... killer!"

As soon as the words escaped his lips, he suddenly vanished, becoming a streak of blood-colored light that pierced through the air at indescribable speed. In fact, it moved so quickly that it seemed capable of moving through time!

It was much faster than any type of teleportation. In the blink of an eye, he was upon the fleeing Master Cloud Lightning, and before the man could even react, slammed into him!

A scream echoed out into the air, and Master Cloud Lightning

trembled violently. He immediately began to wither up, a sensation that filled his heart with indescribable terror.

“How... how can he move so fast!?!? He’s... he’s absorbing my life force!!” Multicolored light flared as Master Cloud Lightning tried to fight back, and yet, he was no match at all for Bai Xiaochun’s Godkiller technique.

Within moments, Master Cloud Lightning was nothing more than skin and bones, his face ashen and tinged by the shadow of death. The flame of his life force was already flickering on the verge of being extinguished.

It happened too quickly. A single blow, and almost all of his life force was sucked away in shocking fashion. Trembling, Master Cloud Lightning let out a shriek of despair.

“No!!”

Immense regret filled him, and yet, in that moment of ultimate calamity, he suddenly realized that there was something strange going on with Bai Xiaochun. He seemed dazed within his blood mist, as though he weren’t even conscious.

A tremor passed through Master Cloud Lightning as hope suddenly appeared within his despair. Knowing that now was not the time to ponder the situation, he took a deep breath and unleashed another divine ability which reversed the withering from before. Then, multicolored light shone brightly as he gritted his teeth and shot downward toward the swamp below!

In an instant, he was inside of the swamp, and yet a moment later, Bai Xiaochun looked down... and followed him!

The entire swamp vibrated. In the briefest moment, hordes of leeches were killed, not by the vibration, but by Bai Xiaochun’s blood mist, which sucked away at all the life force around it.

It wasn’t just the leeches, but the larvae and other entities in the swamp as well. Anything that got too close to Bai Xiaochun ended

up dead!

“So, there is something strange going on with him,” Master Cloud Lightning thought. “That magical technique is completely terrifying! It has to have a weakness!!” He was delighted to have escaped with his life; obviously, Bai Xiaochun was in some sort of semi-conscious state, and had descended into the swamp itself, not to chase Master Cloud Lightning, but to absorb the life force that it contained.

That gave Master Cloud Lightning the chance he needed. As Bai Xiaochun absorbed the life force in the area, Master Cloud Lightning began to speed through the swamp itself. Although doing that was dangerous, it wasn't as dangerous as dealing directly with Bai Xiaochun.

There was clearly something strange going on with Bai Xiaochun, and yet, he didn't even think about looking over his shoulder to try to determine what it was. Bai Xiaochun's magical technique was simply too terrifying, and left Master Cloud Lightning with only one thought in his head... unless he managed to combine with his other half, he had to stay away from Bai Xiaochun at all costs!!

After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, the bedraggled Master Cloud Lightning was quite a distance away. At that point, he burst out from the swamp water. He was covered with leeches and larvae, but didn't even take the time to remove them. Gasping for breath, he shot forward as quickly as possible, glancing over his shoulder, a look of terror on his face.

“That Bai Xiaochun is a complete monster! He just won't die! He's definitely one of the biggest enemies of the north!! But even if he turns out to be stronger than he's already shown himself to be, he still isn't in the mid Deva Realm. Once I combine with my other half... I'll definitely be able to kill him!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, he once again made contact with his other self, and then sped off into the distance.

Meanwhile, now that Bai Xiaochun had dropped down into the swamp itself, a dramatic vortex had begun to spread out in all directions....

The leeches in the swamp were fleeing madly this way and that, as were the larvae.

Even more powerful life forms were doing the same, including spiders, giants, and other terrifying creatures.

As the storm spread out in all directions, all life forms that it touched had their life force drained away, leaving them withered in death....

It lasted for the time it takes two incense sticks to burn....

Then, a boom filled the swamp as Bai Xiaochun shot up into the air. There was no blood mist around him any longer. His face was ruddy, and a look of incredulity could be seen on his face. He was also trembling uncontrollably.

At the moment, he wasn't even thinking about Master Cloud Lightning. Instead, he shot off to a location with some land where he could sit down cross-legged and examine himself closely.

After a long moment passed, his eyes opened, and they flickered with terror.

“Dammit! What just happened? How come I lost consciousness when using the Godkiller technique? What’s the deal?!?!” As he thought back to what had just occurred, his heart shivered with fear.

One thing he was certain of was that after he lost consciousness, his mind was not taken over by any other entity. His body had been acting of its own accord... to absorb as much life force as possible from around it.

The mere thought of that caused Bai Xiaochun to shiver in anxious fear.

“No way. Before, I had no idea how the Godkiller actually worked. But now that I do, I can’t use it. It’s too dangerous.” The feeling of having just lost control of his own body was completely horrifying.

A long moment passed. Suddenly, a look of surprise appeared on his face, as he realized that the destroyed drop of Undying Blood was now fully recovered!

He could only imagine how much life force he had absorbed in those two incense sticks’ worth of time in the swamp....

“If only I could control it, then it would be a much better divine ability.” Feeling torn, he looked down at the swamp and then scanned it with divine sense, only to find that it didn’t contain any life force at all....

Even distant reaches of the swamp were completely vacant of any life force fluctuations.

“How much did I absorb...?” Shaken, and eyes wide, he suddenly felt a bit excited.

“Hahaha! Who would have thought that I’m so awesome! Even after losing consciousness because of the Godkiller, I still accomplished a lot!” He then began to travel through the swamp a bit, whereupon he discovered that there were indeed some signs of life force here and there. However, as soon as he neared, they would vanish, clearly in an attempt to avoid him.

That only got him more excited though. At one point, he patted his bag of holding, pulled out Big Fatty Zhang, and touched his forehead. Big Fatty Zhang’s eyes opened, and he looked around blankly for a moment before noticing Bai Xiaochun. At that point, he immediately jumped up and prepared to say something.

However, Bai Xiaochun beat him to the punch. Clasp ing his hands behind his back and sticking his chin up, he said. “Eldest Brother, you were ambushed in this swamp. I got so mad that I

forced all of the living beings in the swamp to apologize to you. As a result, from this moment on, they will avoid us at all costs. Don't believe me? Go around a bit and see what happens!"

Chapter 936: Terror-Stricken By The News

Big Fatty Zhang was a bit taken aback. He looked at Bai Xiaochun, then looked around them at the swamp, a strange expression on his face. As far as he was concerned, only an idiot would believe what Bai Xiaochun had just said. After all, he knew Bai Xiaochun well, and was used to how he would brag and try to show off. And yet, that same understanding of Bai Xiaochun also caused him to hesitate for a moment.

“Although Xiaochun does like to brag,” he thought, “he doesn’t usually exaggerate things too much. Could it really be true that all the weird bugs and things in the swamp... will avoid us?” After a moment of hesitation, he sent some divine sense out, and was shocked to find that there wasn’t a single life force fluctuation in the area.

To Bai Xiaochun’s pleasure, the two of them proceeded forward through the swamp, with Big Fatty Zhang feeling more shaken with every moment. Before long, he sensed a flicker of life force up ahead. However, as soon as he detected it, it raced away in the opposite direction.

After that same thing happened a few times, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun, a strange expression on his face.

“What do you think, Eldest Brother? It’s like I said, I gave them all a strict warning. Hmmmphh! How dare they ambush my Eldest Brother! It was a kindness on my part to hold back from wiping out the entire swamp.” Bai Xiaochun felt prouder of himself with every moment that passed. Although the Godkiller technique was somewhat perverse, it was very effective.

That was just how Bai Xiaochun was. No matter what situation he found himself in, he could always find the bright side.

To Big Fatty Zhang’s continued shock, the two of them proceeded along through the swamp as smoothly as if it were their own front

yard. Everything was quiet, to the point where Big Fatty Zhang even began to daydream a bit here and there.

At one point, a leech didn't flee in timely fashion, and Big Fatty Zhang managed to grab it. Being so close to Bai Xiaochun caused the leech to let out a shriek of despair, and it even seemed to be pleading for its life. When Big Fatty Zhang relaxed his hand, it whooshed away, vanishing in the blink of an eye.

They also ran into another spider, the same type which had ambushed Big Fatty Zhang earlier. As soon as the spider saw Bai Xiaochun, it shivered and fled in the opposite direction....

Not even Bai Xiaochun could ever have guessed that the creatures in the swamp would end up so terrified of him.

“Could it be that, because of some strange quality of the swamp, when I was unconscious, I let out... even more of that blood mist than I realized was possible?” Eventually, he came to the conclusion that this must be the case. He actually had no idea how much life force he had absorbed, but the fact that it was enough to re-form a drop of Undying Blood was terrifying to think about.

Thankfully, Master Cloud Lightning had been frightened so badly that he fled. A craftier opponent might have taken advantage of that moment of unconsciousness to attack him.

One of the most exaggerated things to unfold in the swamp after the main incident was when they happened across a pack of gaunt wolves that were relying on their incredible speed and dexterity to harass a cultivator. That cultivator happened to be Sun Wu from the Dragon Totem Ghost Sea Sect!

Cultivators from the south were adept at shapeshifting, and at the moment, the green-skinned Sun Wu was using that ability to full effect. Occasionally, he would change into the shape of a vicious, brown centipede that would weave in and out of the attacking wolves.

No matter what he did, however, he couldn't escape the more than 1,000 wolves, who kept him completely surrounded. Visible in the area were a few dead cultivators, which bore testimony to how long the fighting had been going on.

Off to the side was the leader of the pack, a wolf who was little more than a skeleton, with cold, sneering eyes, and energy comparable to a deva.

Sun Wu was already sinking into despair, and was fairly convinced that he wouldn't be able to escape from this calamity. From what he could tell, the only reason the wolves hadn't killed him already was in the hopes of using him to lure out more prey.

He knew that unless a deva came to rescue him, nobody would be able to help him. He was going to die one way or another, and furthermore, was not the type of person who would violate his own principles simply to save his life. Therefore, he was shifting in and out of centipede form in the hopes that the shapeshifting fluctuations would serve as a warning to any other cultivators in the area.

As soon as Bai Xiaochun and Big Fatty Zhang approached, the wolves began to shiver and howl. Then, the entire pack of 1,000 turned and fled with their tails between their legs.

The leader of the pack was the first to start running, and moved especially quickly. However, before it could get very far, Bai Xiaochun's voice rang out sonorously.

"Stay! The rest can go, but you stay!" The rest of the wolves vanished into the swamp. In the blink of an eye... only one wolf out of 1,000 was left behind.

That wolf stood there trembling, the cold arrogance in its eyes replaced by fear. However, it didn't dare to flee, and instead dropped down onto its belly and tried its best to wag its tail.

Big Fatty Zhang was used to scenes such as this, but Sun Wu was

completely stunned. Panting, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun, and almost immediately recognized him.

Even still, he was shocked. Although it made sense for a deva to be able to scare the wolves away, it was completely astonishing that a single word could cause the leader of the pack to not only refrain from fleeing, but also to grovel on the ground.

Filled with gratitude at having just been rescued, Sun Wu hurried over to Bai Xiaochun, clasped hands, and bowed deeply.

“Many thanks for saving my life, Senior Bai!”

Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat. He had begun to feel a bit awkward showing off constantly for Big Fatty Zhang, so now that he had someone new to work with, he definitely had to make a good impression.

Therefore, he made a beckoning motion with his right hand, prompting the shivering wolf to hurry over in front of him. The wolf didn't do anything at all when Bai Xiaochun bopped it on the head. It even wagged its tail vigorously.

Sun Wu's jaw dropped in exaggerated fashion; he was almost incapable of reconciling the image of the tail-wagging wolf with the cruel and vicious beast he had seen earlier. They didn't seem like the same creature....

Bai Xiaochun looked around at the surrounding corpses and found that none were eastern cultivators. Therefore, he snorted and said, “I'll spare your life this time!”

The wolf shivered, although it was impossible to tell whether it was from fear or joy. It gave a few whimpers, then turned and fled into the swamp.

Having driven off the wolves, Bai Xiaochun turned to Sun Wu, who shivered and once again bowed formally.

Off to the side, Big Fatty Zhang cleared his throat, looked at Sun Wu, and then looked back at Bai Xiaochun.

“You’re from the south?” Bai Xiaochun asked.

“Yes indeed, sir. I’m from the Dragon Totem Ghost Sea Sect.”

Bai Xiaochun thought back to Master Thousand-Ghost, whom he had defeated with a single stare. He nodded.

“Very well. You can follow me out of the swamp if you’d like.”

Sun Wu was overjoyed. So far, the swamp had been a nightmare for him, so as far as he was concerned, being able to join Bai Xiaochun was a stroke of good fortune. Bowing incessantly, he said, “Many thanks, Senior Bai!”

Laughing heartily, Big Fatty Zhang hurried over and lifted him up from his bowing.

“We must be connected by destiny,” he said with a smile. “Come come. Why don’t you tell us how you southerners have been doing in this trial by fire?” Big Fatty Zhang was very curious about the south, and Sun Wu was very eager to speak. Other than confidential matters, he was very free with his words.

After going on for a bit, his expression suddenly flickered.

“Oh, I just remembered something! Three days ago, I saw an eastern cultivator trapped in a dangerous location. Although I wished I could save him, not even I dared to get too close.... I think saving him would have required an entire team working together.... He called himself Song Que, and he asked me to tell anyone from the east that he needed help....”

“Que’er?” Bai Xiaochun murmured, a look of shock appearing on his face.

Chapter 937: Hes Still A Child

The trial by fire was made up of four separate lands: a desert, a swamp, a plain, and a jungle, each of which was filled with all sorts of hidden dangers. As for how many people remained alive from the four rivers, no one knew.

By now, it was very obvious to Bai Xiaochun why the requirement to enter the trial by fire was set at the Nascent Soul stage.... Anyone under that level wouldn't even be able to move around.

Even Nascent Soul cultivators... faced deadly peril at every turn!

For example, Sun Wu was in the great circle of the Nascent Soul stage, and was considered a top chosen. He was widely viewed as the most likely disciple in his sect to become a deva, and yet he had been placed into a situation of almost certain death at the hands of those wolves.

Considering how dangerous the trial by fire was, as soon as Bai Xiaochun heard Sun Wu mention the name Song Que, and how he had asked for help, he began to pant. Song Que had always been testy with Bai Xiaochun, and didn't like him very much, but he was his nephew. That was even more the case now that Bai Xiaochun had taken the next step with Song Junwan.

If the situation weren't more dire, Bai Xiaochun might have been inclined to pull a prank on him. But this place was too dangerous. Therefore, he immediately asked Sun Wu to take him to the location where he'd seen Song Que.

Sun Wu didn't dare to be deceptive in any way. He immediately told Bai Xiaochun all the details, after which Bai Xiaochun shot in that direction. Sun Wu and Big Fatty Zhang followed along nervously.

The three of them became bright beams of light that shot

through the sky over the swamp.

Bai Xiaochun was so nervous, and was moving so quickly, that he left Sun Wu and Big Fatty Zhang behind. About half a day passed, and he was already closing in on the location where Song Que was trapped.

As the fluctuations of his aura spread out into the area, he sent some divine sense out to ascertain the situation. Afterward, he sighed in relief.

“Que’er sure is a fortunate child!” Sticking his chin up, he mused about how truly lucky Song Que was. After all, whenever he got into danger, Bai Xiaochun always seemed to come rescue him.

Song Que was currently in a violet pool of water, surrounded by countless floating eyes, each one of which was several meters wide.

Shockingly, there were cultivators sealed inside many of the eyes....

There were men and women from all four of the river branches, most of them already skeletons, although a few were in a partial state of decomposition....

Two of them were still gasping for breath, one of those two being... Song Que.

Black tendrils of smoke were wrapped around him, almost like snakes, slowly absorbing him. Thankfully, the Song Clan patriarch had given him a legacy treasure from the clan that had kept him alive so far. Without it, he would have long since died.

The legacy treasure was a cloak, the soft light of which prevented the black smoke from piercing into his body.

It was clearly a fantastic, powerful item, and yet, as time went on, it was clearly being worn down, and the light it emitted was beginning to grow faint.

In fact, given the level of Song Que’s cultivation base, not even

that cloak should have enabled him to hang on this long. However, for some unknown reason, only a few days ago, the eyes had suddenly become much weaker, almost as if they had aged.

That had given Song Que some hope, and had helped him use the power of the cloak to hang on a bit longer.

However, he knew that unless someone came to save him... he would not be able to unseal himself and escape. And that meant that he would definitely meet his end eventually.

“Don’t tell me that I, Song Que, am actually going to perish in this trial by fire!” he thought bitterly. Already, his joints were growing stiff, and his cultivation base was beginning to fade.

“I refuse to give in! I still haven’t defeated that damned Bai Xiaochun! I still haven’t trampled him beneath my feet! I still haven’t had my revenge on him! I survived for year after bitter year in the Wildlands, I refuse to believe that a measly trial by fire is going to be the death of me!!

“I, Song Que, am a person blessed by luck. No matter what deadly crises I’ve faced in my life, I always come out on top. From Qi Condensation all the way to the Nascent Soul stage, it was always like that. I’m not going to die here!” Howling, he struggled to free himself until he went blue in the face. That was when he noticed that, all of a sudden, the surrounding eyes were trembling.

The eyes who had no cultivators in them blinked in terror, and then turned and vanished into the swamp.

The violet pool had once contained so many eyes it was impossible to count them all. But now, ninety-nine percent of them were gone.... The few dozen that remained began to blink rapidly to unseal the cultivators and corpses inside of them, spit them out, and then flee.

The eye which held Song Que seemed particularly hesitant. However, after a moment, Song Que felt a powerful force gripping

him, and he was thrown out into the open. Within moments, the eye which had held him sealed for so many days had vanished into the swamp.

Song Que stood there with a blank expression on his face, looking around in confusion. Everything had happened so quickly that he wasn't really sure how to react.

One moment ago, the area had been filled with innumerable vicious eyes, but now... not a single one was in sight. It was almost as if the events of recent days had been a dream.

"Could it be... could it be that those eyes can only exist for a certain period of time, after which they vanish?" Although he couldn't be sure if his speculation was true, his heart was currently pounding with joy at having escaped certain death. Excited, he began to study his surroundings when, all of a sudden, he looked up into the sky, and his eyes went wide.

Much of the spiritual power inside of him had been drained away, but he could still focus enough on his eyes to see very clearly that, there, off in the distance... was Bai Xiaochun, smiling broadly.

It was at that point that Bai Xiaochun's voice reached Song Que's ears.

"Hi, Que'er...."

Song Que's expression darkened. Then he saw that two people were following Bai Xiaochun, one being Big Fatty Zhang, and the other being Sun Wu, whom Song Que had previously begged for help.

If by this point Song Que didn't realize why the eyes had vanished, it would have revealed him to be a complete idiot. Therefore, he simply turned to fly away.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that Song Que was flying away, he was not happy at all.

“How could you be so impolite, Que’er!? I can’t believe you didn’t even say hello to me!” With that, he made a grasping motion, causing Song Que’s expression to turn even grimmer as he was grabbed by an invisible force and dragged over to Bai Xiaochun.

Upon seeing Bai Xiaochun, Song Que acted as though he had just caught sight of a diseased animal. That increased Bai Xiaochun’s displeasure, and was also a big loss of face, considering that there were other people present.

“Que’er, I am a member of the elder generation, and am also your uncle. You know, I’m well within my rights to criticize your actions if I want to!”

Song Que was feeling very frustrated and depressed. As far as he was concerned, being captured by those vicious eyes had actually been a lot better than being trapped by Bai Xiaochun. After all, the eyes could inflict physical pain, but Bai Xiaochun inflicted mental torture.

And yet, Song Que didn’t say anything. He actually wasn’t sure what to say. His action of turning to leave had actually been instinctual. He hadn’t put any thought into it whatsoever.

He could tell that Bai Xiaochun was displeased, and therefore, he braced himself and prepared to offer an explanation. It was at around this time that Big Fatty Zhang and Sun Wu arrived. Sun Wu didn’t seem to notice the awkwardness of the situation, but Big Fatty Zhang knew Song Que fairly well, and could guess what was going on. He had also heard some of Bai Xiaochun’s words. Therefore, his eyes lit up, and he leaped forward.

“Xiaochun, Que’er is still just a child. He’s always been the filial type, so what happened just now was probably just a misunderstanding.... Que’er, you need to listen to your Uncle Fatty. What you did just now was wrong. Your Uncle Bai came here to save you, and yet you didn’t even say hello? Look, I know that you’re a good kid. Come offer greetings to your uncle, and

then... well, your uncle's close friends are also members of the senior generation...." From the look in Big Fatty Zhang's eyes, it was clear that he very much looked forward to what was going to happen next.

Song Que's expression turned grimmer as he glared at Big Fatty Zhang. He almost felt like his blood was about to start flowing backwards. For Bai Xiaochun to take advantage of him was one thing, but for Big Fatty Zhang to do the same pushed Song Que to the point where he felt like his head was about to explode.

And then he thought about the possibility that he would have to call all of Bai Xiaochun's friends Uncle and Aunt, and his mind began to spin.

"Big Fatty Zhang!"

Chapter 938: Moonflower

Song Que's shout seem to vent all of his depression and frustration. However, Big Fatty Zhang had simply been too biting, and even though Song Que didn't want to, he suddenly envisioned himself greeting all of Bai Xiaochun's friends.

"Uncle Baocai.... Uncle Tianyou.... Aunt Xiaomei.... Uncle God-Diviner...." As far as Song Que was concerned, it would be worse than heavenly tribulation. Trembling, he glared with bloodshot eyes, not at Bai Xiaochun --didn't dare to do that-- but rather, at Big Fatty Zhang. From the look on his face, if one more wrong word was uttered, he would fly into a rage and attack.

Big Fatty Zhang was actually startled by Song Que's shout, and started to get a bit nervous. After all, Song Que had quite a reputation in the Blood Stream Sect. However, considering that Bai Xiaochun was standing right there, it didn't seem likely that Song Que would actually do anything. Besides, Big Fatty Zhang really looked forward to the prospect of being addressed as an uncle.

That having been said, he was still surprised at Song Que's reaction to such a small thing.

Off to the side, Sun Wu was stunned by what he was seeing. He had no idea of the backstory involved, and only knew that Bai Xiaochun was a deva patriarch.

From Sun Wu's perspective, a Nascent Soul cultivator like Song Que was a junior to Bai Xiaochun, something completely and utterly natural....

"No wonder Senior Bai was so anxious to get over here. As it turns out, his Daoist partner is Fellow Daoist Song's aunt...." Considering that, Sun Wu also felt that Song Que was acting a bit disrespectfully.

“Senior Bai hurried over here as quickly as he could to save Song Que, who didn't even offer greetings? And then he just turned to leave? No wonder Senior Bai is angry....” Although Big Fatty Zhang's demands had seemed a bit excessive, Sun Wu could still understand them.

Finally, he put a warm smile onto his face, looked at Song Que, and said, “You did well to put your trust in me, Fellow Daoist Song. Clearly, the heavens have blessed you. Who would have thought that you were so close to the exalted Senior Bai? I can only be envious of the fact that you are a junior to him!”

Song Que wished he could say something, but couldn't think of anything to say. Big Fatty Zhang was trying to take advantage of him, and Sun Wu was making it worse. Although he wanted to start arguing, the truth was that Sun Wu really had saved his life.

Song Que's frustrations built and built, until he felt like he was about to go crazy. Finally, he simply threw back his head and howled at the top of his lungs. As he did, Bai Xiaochun sighed.

To see Song Que acting this way actually left Bai Xiaochun feeling a bit bad.

“Alright, Big Fatty Zhang. Leave Que'er alone. The child has had it very rough. Que'er, you shouldn't be going around alone. Come with me, alright? It will be a lot safer that way.”

Song Que felt like crying when he heard that. Bai Xiaochun's words had touched directly on the most sensitive part of his heart. In the face of such bald-faced provocation from Big Fatty Zhang, it was very moving to see Bai Xiaochun being so kind.

However, even in the moment that his gratitude swelled, Bai Xiaochun looked over and said something that ruined everything....

“Calm down, Que'er. Be a good boy, now. I'm not going to let anyone bully you!” Fearful that Song Que was taking everything

the wrong way, Bai Xiaochun reached out and tousled his hair.

“AAAAGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHH!” Song Que howled, his heart overcome by madness and humiliation at having eight generations of extremely bad luck heaped upon his head.

From the moment he had met Bai Xiaochun to now, his life had been an endless stream of frustration. As he howled, his weak spiritual power and tenuous hold on his emotions caused a stream of blood to spray out of his mouth. Then he flopped down onto the ground, unconscious.

“He passed out again...?” Bai Xiaochun murmured, feeling a headache coming on. Big Fatty Zhang stared down at him in shock, puzzled at how poorly Song Que took a simple joke....

“Look at how mad you got him, Eldest Brother. Ai... Well, you just carry him on your back for now.”

Big Fatty Zhang was also scowling on the verge of tears at the strangeness of it all. From what he could remember, Song Que was definitely not like this. Hoisting Song Que onto his back, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

“Xiaochun, what did you mean when you said that he passed out ‘again’? He’s passed out before in the past?”

“Oh, you have no idea. The poor child was harmed mentally back in the Wildlands. Whenever he gets too excited, he passes out. It's fine.... He’ll wake up in the next two or three days.” Clearing his throat, Bai Xiaochun quickly changed the topic of conversation, and then led the shocked Big Fatty Zhang and Sun Wu off into the distance.

As the group flew along through the swamp, ten days passed by. Soon, they were getting close to the edge of the swamp, beyond which was a vast plain covered by a sky as overcast as the swamp’s.

Although things had remained peaceful and quiet during their journey through the swamp, Bai Xiaochun had not come out

without certain gains. In his hand, he held a seed.

It was emerald green, and pulsed with a frigid qi that turned his entire hand cold as he held it.

The seed had once been a flower, which he had encountered a few days ago.

The petals of that flower had resembled moons, and despite being somewhat stunted in appearance, looked very unique growing alone in the middle of a swamp. Upon approaching the flower, Bai Xiaochun had noticed how it seemed to notice him, and then try to shrink down into the ground below. Curious, he had gone closer, which was when he had noticed that the frigid qi emanating from the flower closely resembled the frigid qi that came from cultivating the Frigid School Will-Evolving Incantation.

Surprised, he had expended a bit of effort to dig up the flower. By the time he got to it though, it had shriveled up into a seed.

After some study, Bai Xiaochun realized that in the process of blooming, the flower would absorb frigid qi from the surroundings. Unfortunately, there wasn't much frigid qi in the swamp, which had prevented the flower from growing to its full potential.

“Maybe with enough study, I can put this flower to use in my own cultivation of frigid qi. I think I'll call it a moonflower.” With that, he continued to lead his small group along. Along the way, they saw corpses here and there, some from the other three rivers, and some from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

The sight of the corpses caused everyone's moods to sink. Song Que had long since regained consciousness. Originally, his expression had been very grim, but after traveling along and seeing all the corpses, his attitude changed.

“What kind of trial by fire is this...?” That same question floated in the minds of everyone present. As for Big Fatty Zhang, Song

Que, and Sun Wu, they knew that without Bai Xiaochun there to protect them, they would all have likely died inside the swamp....

“Maybe this so-called trial by fire isn't actually about finding an apprentice for the Celestial... but all about that exit!” Such were the thoughts of Bai Xiaochun. By now, they had been within the trial by fire for about two months.

During that time, he had confirmed that ordinary Nascent Soul cultivators simply could not survive. Even those who were in the great circle could only rely on incredible battle prowess and pure luck to pass through any of the four main areas.

Because of that, Bai Xiaochun was fairly certain... that even if the Celestial really wanted an apprentice, it wasn't necessary to pick one via such a deadly trial by fire.

That left only one obvious solution to the riddle....

“The Celestial's true goal is to find that so-called exit....

“In that case... it would mean that even he doesn't know where it is. And that means... that not even the Celestial is truly familiar with the lands in this trial by fire!!

“This supposed trial by fire is merely a casting out of pawns. He's just hoping that if he throws enough people into the mix, someone will find the exit!

“There must also be some other secret at play here. Otherwise, why would the Celestial make up a story about accepting an apprentice? That was just... to trick people into coming!” The more Bai Xiaochun analyzed the situation, the more unsightly his expression became. Of course, he also couldn't be certain that his analysis was correct.

Either way, the trial by fire was very dangerous. Both the desert and the swamp left him feeling very jumpy.

Without his Godkiller technique, he would have been in even more danger in the swamp.

All of these thoughts got him even more worried about the other people left in the trial by fire. Originally, there had been over a thousand, but now, it was likely that more than half were dead.

As for the others, they would surely have come to the realization that the trial was dangerous beyond imagination, and that something fishy was going on.

However, such realizations did little good.... Clearly, until someone found the exit, everyone would be facing death at every corner.

Even the supremely powerful Bai Xiaochun was still feeling a lot of pressure. Although he had calmed the swamp down, he knew that was only on the surface. During his travels, his divine sense had revealed on numerous occasions that there were things hiding in the depths.

Such entities didn't reveal any hostility when his divine sense touched them, but he also knew that without his Godkiller technique, they would have been deadly threats.

“What the hell kind of place is this?!” Even as he pondered the situation, he finally left the swamp and entered the endless plain.

Wind scraped across the plain, which seemed to be filled with nothing more than an undulating sea of grass, interspersed with occasional corpses that had been gnawed at by unknown teeth....

The sight caused Big Fatty Zhang, Song Que, and Sun Wu to feel jumpier than ever. From the sight of the few corpses they could see, it was obvious that the plain was a very dangerous place.

After flying over the grass for about ten days, Bai Xiaochun's face suddenly fell. He had just detected a burst of killing intent, something that caused the air to grow cold around him. Backing up, he shouted, “Eldest Brother, get everybody out of here. Don't worry about me!!”

As soon as the words left his mouth, a sound like rumbling

thunder echoed across the plain, and two huge faces appeared up above in the sky.

They belonged to none other than... the twin Master Cloud Lightnings!

Chapter 939: Split Them Up!

When Bai Xiaochun saw the two enormous faces of the twin Master Cloud Lightnings up in the sky, his heart began to pound. He had already tangled with them more than once in this trial by fire, and now here they were together. It had the potential to be a big problem, and therefore, he immediately sent Sun Wu, Big Fatty Zhang and Song Que away.

“This time, you’re dead, Bai Xiaochun!” howled the faces up above, their voices echoing like heavenly thunder. Subsequently, one of them shot toward Bai Xiaochun, and the other headed in the direction of Big Fatty Zhang, Sun Wu and Song Que.

Obviously, they didn't just plan to kill Bai Xiaochun, but also the people under his protection.

This new development occurred in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. When Bai Xiaochun realized what was happening, his anxiety spiked. Knowing that his three companions would never be able to escape, he swished his sleeve to gather them into his bag of holding.

As he did, cold gleams flickered through the eyes of the faces high in the sky. Clearly, their hatred for Bai Xiaochun ran very strong and deep!

It didn't matter that Bai Xiaochun had used his Godkiller technique on Master Cloud Lightning. Now that his two halves were able to team up, they were more confident and prepared than ever. Therefore, it was without the slightest hesitation that they attacked.

The younger brother of the two was adept in matters of speed, so he shot through the air toward Bai Xiaochun. As for the older brother, he was at the peak of the mid Deva Realm, and his attack consisted of countless bolts of lightning that transformed into a shocking hand which reached out toward Bai Xiaochun as if to grab

him!

“DIE!!” they howled simultaneously.

Bai Xiaochun was feeling quite nervous, and could tell that the situation was already very dangerous. There was no time for thought or planning. As he backed up, he performed an incantation gesture with both hands, and then waved them out in front of him.

“Waterswamp!!” he shouted. Instantly, water vapor roiled out across the plain, turning it into an enormous swamp.

“Kingdom!!”

It sounded as if the world were being ripped open. The twin Master Cloud Lightnings' faces both flickered. Considering that both of them had fought Bai Xiaochun before, they had assumed that they had already seen all of his techniques. Never could they have imagined that they would encounter another unfamiliar move.

Furthermore, the watery swamp around them filled them with a sensation of profound danger. Rumbling sounds echoed out as a row of spikes rose up from below. Mountain-toppling, sea-draining force roiled out as the spikes transformed into claws, which were attached to a huge hand. At this point, a shocking howl erupted into the air.

The energy shaking the area made the sky quiver, seemingly on the verge of collapse. The twin Master Cloud Lightnings were both stunned. Because of his speed, the younger brother was a bit closer, and bore the initial brunt of the blow. Blood sprayed from his mouth as he was sent tumbling backward. Meanwhile, the other half of Master Cloud Lightning went all out with his lightning attack. In the blink of an eye, his lightning hand made contact with the claws.

The sky shook and the lands quaked as the lightning palm

shattered in the face of the all-powerful Waterswamp Kingdom's claws. However, this opponent of Bai Xiaochun's surpassed Chen Hetian and the other devas he had fought in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Therefore, the Waterswamp Kingdom rapidly faded away.

As it did, Bai Xiaochun retreated with lightning speed. After all, he knew that he would never be able to win against the combined force of both Master Cloud Lightnings, especially considering that he couldn't control his Godkiller.

Taking advantage of the moments in which the Waterswamp Kingdom was still fading away, Bai Xiaochun fled, and was soon heading toward the horizon.

"Now we'll make him enjoy the bitterness of being chased!" The twin Master Cloud Lightnings gritted their teeth. Eyes shining with killing intent, they became bright beams of light that shot after Bai Xiaochun, thunderous sound waves rolling off of them in all directions.

From a distance, it almost looked like they had combined with each other, but closer examination would reveal that the process was not complete yet. However, even their current level enabled them to surpass the limits of the mid Deva Realm, and achieve speed... comparable to the late realm!

What made Bai Xiaochun even more nervous was that the twin Master Cloud Lightnings were continuing to merge together, and as they did, the resulting aura contained power that caused his scalp to tingle with fear.

"What complete bullying! They bullied me in the staring contest, but couldn't beat me in a fight, so now they're ganging up! The Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect is full of bullies!" Heart pounding, he called upon the Undying Hex for a burst of speed. Behind him, rumbling sounds echoed out as the twin Master Cloud Lightnings continued to merge, and also send attacks his way.

From a distance, it was possible to see lightning bolts slamming repeatedly into Bai Xiaochun, with the resulting explosions sending black smoke billowing out around him, which would reduce his speed. And with every moment that passed, the twin Master Cloud Lightnings got closer.

Feeling very nervous, Bai Xiaochun called out, “Uh... Fellow Daoists Cloud Lightning, don’t push things too far, okay? I have a trump card designed specifically for you two. Even I’m afraid of what will happen if I use it.”

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings snorted coldly and continued to close in, their murderous auras raging. Bai Xiaochun was a blur as he used his Mountain Shaking Bash to avoid the lightning attacks, and the Undying Hex to buy speed.

Unfortunately, his anxiety only continued to mount. When he had used the Waterswamp Kingdom moments ago, he had clearly seen how incredibly powerful the twin Master Cloud Lightnings would be if they fully combined. And that was now happening as he watched!

“I can’t let things go on like this. I need to prevent them from combining.... Damnation! What technique can actually split a person in two? I need to prevent them from getting together... I need to split them up... hey!”

In that critical moment, an idea struck him without any warning.

“Split them up?!” he thought excitedly. Maintaining full speed, he secretly pulled out a Breakup Pill, and at the same time, produced his flying shuttle. After using a secret magic to conceal the pill inside the shuttle, he hurled it back at the twin Master Cloud Lightnings.

“Eee? Fellow Daoists Cloud Lightning, that’s your flying shuttle, right? Aiya, I randomly happened across it a while back, and based on the aura, I can tell it’s yours. Alright, just take it back!” Both of the twin Master Cloud Lightnings were visibly taken aback by his

words.

Never could they have imagined that Bai Xiaochun, who had previously acted so imperious and disdainful, would go and say something like this.

However, before they could do anything other than be surprised, Bai Xiaochun performed an incantation gesture and shouted, “Detonate!”

The flying shuttle exploded, sending out a shockwave that completely enveloped the twin Master Cloud Lightnings.

The detonation also burst the Breakup Pill, sending a black mist roiling out in all directions.

Bai Xiaochun didn't bother to even look back at the result, and simply picked up more speed. As he did, a violet bolt of lightning shot out from the black mist and the fragments of the flying shuttle.

That lightning bolt was none other than the twin Master Cloud Lightnings, their expressions unsightly and their murderous auras boiling.

“A hidden poison pill? You think trash like that can hurt me? In my combined state, I'm impervious to all poisons!” Both of the twin Master Cloud Lightnings spoke at the same time, their voices combining in bizarre fashion. It was at this point that Bai Xiaochun realized there were soul fluctuations within the voice that gave a bit of insight into the twin Master Cloud Lightnings' current state. Clearly, they were not yet fully combined, and needed more time to complete the process.

“The Breakup Pill didn't work?” he thought, disappointed. “Don't tell me that it only works between men and women? Or was the dose too weak?”

He considered turning to fight, but also had the feeling that if there were any major weaknesses because of their partially-

combined state, the twin Master Cloud Lightnings wouldn't be pursuing him so aggressively.

"They must be trying to trick me!" he thought. Not willing to risk it, he gritted his teeth and continued onward.

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings frowned and exchanged a glance. Yet again, they found Bai Xiaochun's behavior to be incongruous. In their estimation, the fact that the combining process was not complete should have prompted Bai Xiaochun to turn and fight. Of course, the truth was that... they could finish combining with each other at any time they wished.

The only downside was that their combined state would only last for a short time. Therefore, they hoped to wait until close-quarters fighting actually broke out before starting the clock.

"It doesn't matter if this Bai Xiaochun is clever. He's going to die beyond the shadow of a doubt!" Snorting coldly, the twin Master Cloud Lightnings picked up speed, and began to close the distance.

And thus the true chase began....

The day passed, then the night.... Bai Xiaochun had a powerful fleshly body, and incredible restorative powers. Therefore, he could maintain top speed for a long time. Occasionally, he would toss out some Breakup Pills, although it wasn't possible for him to hit Master Cloud Lightning directly....

"Fudge! I refuse to believe that my Breakup Pills aren't working!" Unwilling to accept defeat, he continued to throw out pills....

Chapter 940: Not Meant For Each Other....

“After all this running, he’s still got energy left?!” The twin Master Cloud Lightnings both frowned at the sight of Bai Xiaochun fleeing. “We can’t stretch things out any longer!”

Taking a deep breath, they decided that now was the time to finish combining their two halves. However, it was also in that moment that their expressions flickered, and they looked up into the sky.

Bai Xiaochun sensed the same thing they had. Gasping for breath, he turned back to see that an enormous face had taken shape up above, surrounded by so much swirling black mist that it was difficult to make out its facial features. However, it was profoundly sinister as it looked at the three other devas.

“Master Thousand-Ghost!” the twin Master Cloud Lightnings exclaimed. However, they didn’t slow down in their pursuit of Bai Xiaochun.

This newly-arrived deva was none other than Master Thousand-Ghost, who had been searching for other southern cultivators on the vast plain. After detecting the fluctuations of battle, he had sent his divine sense over to see what was happening.

Now that he had assessed the situation, he decided to continue on with his own affairs. As far as he was concerned, friction between the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect and the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect had nothing to do with him. Almost as soon as it appeared, his face began to fade away.

Seeing that Master Thousand-Ghost was leaving caused the twin Master Cloud Lightnings to both breathe sighs of relief. After all, if Master Thousand-Ghost interfered, it could very well make it impossible for them to get to Bai Xiaochun.

However, it was in that moment that Bai Xiaochun’s eyes lit up,

and he cried, “Hold on a moment, Fellow Daoist Thousand-Ghost! There’s a chosen from the south named Sun Wu, right...?”

When Master Thousand-Ghost heard that, he stopped in place. Then, mysterious, sinister light shone in the eyes of his huge face as he turned to look at Bai Xiaochun again.

Bai Xiaochun immediately slapped his bag of holding, pulling Sun Wu, Big Fatty Zhang and Song Que out into the open.

“Fellow Daoist Thousand-Ghost, your disciple Sun Wu was in big trouble, and I rescued him. Doesn’t that mean the Dragon Totem Ghost Sea Sect owes me a favor?!”

Master Thousand-Ghost was taken aback. Sun Wu was indeed a chosen from the southern river, and if Bai Xiaochun had rescued him, it meant that the south truly did owe him a favor.

At any other time, Master Thousand-Ghost would have immediately nodded in agreement. However, he could see that the twin Master Cloud Lightnings were just about to combine forms. Considering the weakened state Bai Xiaochun was obviously in, even if he joined forces with him, the two of them would still not be a match for Master Cloud Lightning.

And thus, he hesitated.

In that moment of hesitation, the twin Master Cloud Lightnings’ faces fell, and they both cried out, “Master Thousand-Ghost. This is a personal issue between us and Bai Xiaochun. Please refrain from interfering, and we will give you a wonderful gift after everything is over!”

In response, Master Thousand-Ghost’s eyes flashed with determination. Waving his right hand, he pulled Sun Wu away, along with Big Fatty Zhang and Song Que. At the same time, his voice echoed out, as bizarre and mysterious as an evil ghost.

“Fellow Daoist Bai, you saved Sun Wu, and I will repay you by saving these two disciples from your sect. In fact, not only will I

save them, I will ensure that they leave this trial by fire in safety.”

Bai Xiaochun smiled bitterly in response. However, he had known that Master Thousand-Ghost would not just interfere without good reason. And for him to have offered to save Big Fatty Zhang and Song Que left Bai Xiaochun feeling a bit more at ease. Flicking his sleeve, he quickly transmitted an explanation to Big Fatty Zhang and Song Que.

And thus, the three lower-level disciples were all whisked away by Master Thousand-Ghost.

It only took a moment for Master Thousand-Ghost to be far away in the distance. At that point, the eyes of the twin Master Cloud Lightnings flashed with cold light, and they proceeded with their earlier plan of completing the process of combining.

The withered sides of their two halves merged together, and in the briefest of moments, they became a single person!

In that moment, a burst of energy swept out in all directions, creating a shocking windstorm.

A 3,000-meter-wide tempest ravaged heaven and earth as, at its very center... a man appeared, tall and burly, like an immortal devil!

His eyes flickered with anger as his black hair whipped about. There was something netherworldly about him now, something indescribably monstrous!

Rifts were torn open into the air around him, as though it couldn't handle the pressure radiating off of him. The slightest movement of his hand would cause thunderous rumbling sounds, and his will was so powerful that it was already beginning to drive Bai Xiaochun's will away.

He was strong!

Very, very strong!!

Bai Xiaochun could clearly sense that the combined Master Cloud Lightning's cultivation base far surpassed the mid Deva Realm. It was in the late realm, and in fact, very close to... the great circle!!

Feeling deeply shaken, Bai Xiaochun began to back up. However, that was when the combined Master Cloud Lightning looked over at him with a derisive smile.

Then he took a step forward, a step which seemed to bend space, instantly bringing him directly next to Bai Xiaochun, where he waved his hand.

That casual motion sent out terrifyingly destructive power in the form of a black spark of electricity. Bai Xiaochun's scalp tingled in terror, and all of his flesh seemed to be screaming along with it. Without any hesitation, he performed an incantation gesture to send out a defensive blast of energy.

A huge boom rang out as he flopped backward like a kite with its string cut, blood oozing out of the corners of his mouth. He flew more than 3,000 meters away before finally grinding to a halt.

"I can't believe this guy got so powerful after combining his two halves!" Bai Xiaochun thought. If it weren't for his incredible fleshly body power, he would have already been torn to pieces. All of a sudden, he realized that it was a really good thing he had only tried to use Breakup Pills, and not Aphrodisiac Pills. That would have been far too dangerous....

Before Bai Xiaochun could even stand up straight, Master Cloud Lightning's voice echoed out, as cold as the dead of winter.

"I said you'll die this day, Bai Xiaochun. And that means you won't have a chance to see the light of tomorrow!" With that, Master Cloud Lightning took another step forward, and was just about to unleash another attack when....

All of a sudden, his face fell, and a second, unique voice spoke from his mouth!

“Brother, I don’t think the two of us are meant for each other. We’ll never be happy if we forcibly try to stick together!”

A spasm ran through Master Cloud Lightning’s perfectly combined body. Unexpectedly... a second version of himself suddenly appeared! Apparently, the younger of the twin Master Cloud Lightnings wasn’t willing to remain in a combined state.

A look of shock and horror overtook Master Cloud Lightning’s face, combined with an expression of intense disbelief.

“What’s going on?!?!” Nothing like this had ever happened to Master Cloud Lightning. It was as if there were two different consciousnesses within him that were rejecting each other.... His aura was destabilizing, and seemed like it might collapse at any moment. Even worse, his left hand began to struggle with his right hand....

Bai Xiaochun was overjoyed, and if it weren’t for the intense fear which still gripped his heart, he would have begun to dance wildly.

“The Breakup Pills are finally working!!”

Even as Master Cloud Lightning began to split apart, Bai Xiaochun howled, causing an enormous, shadowy figure to appear behind him!

The figure wore an imperial crown and imperial robes, and exuded the most domineering of airs. Bai Xiaochun clenched his hand into a fist, causing a black hole to appear that sucked in all of his life force, making him seem almost like he was dead.

However, the intense fluctuations that rolled off of his fist caused the air to distort with destructive power. Ripples spread out over the plain, crushing the grass flat as a fist appeared!

Undying Emperor’s Fist!!

Quintuple power!

Bai Xiaochun began to thrum with incredible energy as the

shadowy emperor behind him merged with his fist, which then shot directly toward Master Cloud Lightning!

In that critical moment, Master Cloud Lightning's heart pounded like mad. As the two consciousnesses within him struggled, Bai Xiaochun's fist strike approached. Any advantage Master Cloud Lightning had seized earlier was now gone, and it had happened so fast that he didn't have any time to contemplate how to respond.

However, he was a veteran of many battles, and thus wasn't caught completely off guard. Crackling sounds could be heard, like that from a fire. Master Cloud Lightning's hair then turned white as he burned his longevity to temporarily negate the effects of the Breakup Pills.

"Cloud Lightning Forefather: Sixth Transformation!!"

"Cloud Lightning Forefather: Seventh Transformation!!"

"Cloud Lightning Forefather: Eighth Transformation!!"

Master Cloud Lightning's energy suddenly surged in heaven-shaking, earth-shattering fashion. He rapidly grew larger, until he was 240 meters tall, with a savage aura that made it truly seem as if the forefather of all humanity had appeared in the flesh!

He was burly and broad-shouldered, with wild, disheveled hair, and eyes that shone with madness. The sky trembled above, and the vast plain quaked around him. As of this moment, he had surpassed the will of the heavens, and was an embodiment of magical laws!

"Be destroyed!" he shouted, his voice crackling like heavenly thunder.

Chapter 941: That Form Of Address....

It was almost like heaven was colliding with the earth. Bai Xiaochun's Undying Emperor's Fist engulfed everything in the area, unleashing quintuple his ordinary fleshly body power to create a force that was like a meteor that could destroy the world!

Master Cloud Lightning's Forefather Transformation was similarly a peak-level divine ability, something that could fundamentally alter the structure of one's body!

The forefather of all humanity was none other than the legendary ancestor of everyone in the Heavenspan Realm. Of course, the forefather's body that was created by this technique couldn't compare at all to the actual forefather. And yet, even a sliver of that forefather's strength could give Master Cloud Lightning the ability to crush everything in his path.

As the meteor and the lightning slammed into each other, a huge boom echoed out!

A massive shockwave roared out across the vast plain, destroying all of the plants and vegetation it touched!

There were also many living things hidden underneath the grass which were transformed into nothing but ash....

Many other cultivators in the trial by fire also noticed what was happening.

“What's going on?!?!”

“Heavens! Those fluctuations.... Don't tell me some devas are fighting?!?! But even a fight between devas shouldn't cause fluctuations like that!”

Everyone was completely and utterly shocked. As for Master Thousand-Ghost, he suddenly stopped in place and turned to look back in the direction of the battlefield he had just left, his pupils constricting.

“Master Cloud-Lightning is strong. Everybody knows that. But this Bai Xiaochun... I can’t believe he’s able to fight back, and send out fluctuations like this....” A thoughtful look suddenly appeared in his eyes.

Meanwhile, in a location near the border between the jungle and the vast plain, Du Lingfei and that strange young man were together with their team, traveling along.

They had already explored the desert, the swamp, and the jungle, and were now working on the plain.

When the fluctuations reached them, Du Lingfei suddenly turned and looked over her shoulder.

“Ignore it,” the strange young man said coolly. Not even those shocking fluctuations seemed worthy of his notice.

Du Lingfei nodded in response. All she could tell at the moment was that the fluctuations were coming from some distance away. There was no way for her to tell any detailed information about what was happening. Without putting much more thought into the matter, she proceeded along deeper into the plain.

As the shockwave rolled out from the point of impact between Bai Xiaochun and Master Cloud Lightning, the lands were ripped to pieces, and a huge crater appeared. As for Bai Xiaochun, blood sprayed out of his mouth as he was flung violently backward.

His vision swam and then began to fade, and he could feel stabs of pain throughout his body. He currently felt so weak that he wasn’t sure he could even lift his hand.

His fleshly body power was mostly drained, but his cultivation base was still in place. Drawing upon its power, he turned into a beam of light that shot off into the distance.

His aura was unstable, and his heart was pounding. The backlash from his attack had been significant. Master Cloud Lightning’s divine ability had been shockingly powerful, so strong that, for the

first time, the Undying Emperor's Fist couldn't stand up to the force, and had been vanquished.

However, Master Cloud Lightning's forefather incarnation had also been crushed. Bai Xiaochun's Undying Emperor's Fist could destroy someone in the mid Deva Realm, and could still be shocking to someone in the late realm!

Unfortunately for Master Cloud Lightning, were it not for his misgivings, he could easily have dispelled the attack. But instead... he ended up in worse state than Bai Xiaochun.

He was trembling from head to toe, and his combined form was beginning to split apart again. At the same time, strange words were spilling from his mouth.

"Brother, let's split apart. From now on, you're you, and I'm me!"

"Little brother, you can't be like this! We're the same person...."

Master Cloud Lightning felt like he was about to go crazy. When in his combined state, his divine soul was complete. And yet despite that, he still seemed to have split into two parts who were arguing and rejecting each other.

At the same time, his body seemed to be going back and forth between wanting to split apart and wanting to stay together. The overall sensation had him hovering on the verge of mental collapse.

Finally, he threw his head back and roared, drawing fully upon his secret magic to suppress the second consciousness within him and maintain his combined state. However, his aura was weakening, and he was now barely as powerful as he had been when he had first started the process.

"I'm gonna kill you, Bai Xiaochun!!" he howled, shooting after Bai Xiaochun at rapid speed.

Bai Xiaochun gasped at how powerfully Master Cloud Lightning

was being affected by the Breakup Pills. It was a good thing he had concocted such pills to begin with, otherwise, it would have been a terrifying challenge to face the combined Master Cloud Lightning.

The man really was too strong after combining, and seemed far too powerful to deal with.

“Not even my Undying Emperor’s Fist did any good. Don’t tell me I’m going to have to use the Godkiller again....” The vile repercussions of using the Godkiller technique were almost too painful to think about.

“Complete and utter bullying. He ganged up on me in the staring contest, and now he’s ganging up on me again!!” He was very displeased by the whole situation, and yet was helpless to do anything about it. It was quite depressing.

“Dammit! I guess the Breakup Pill dosage was too low. I need to up the strength!” Even as he scrambled to think of what exactly to do next, numerous lightning bolts shot down toward him.

Scalp tingling with fear, he dodged out of the way, and then threw out a Breakup Pill. Master Cloud Lightning’s eyes widened, and he leaped off to the side. By now, he truly feared Bai Xiaochun’s medicinal pills.

“This guy’s pills are completely malicious!!” he thought. Obviously, he had long since connected the dots, and come to realize that his current difficulties were because of the medicinal mist that Bai Xiaochun’s pills had created earlier.

The thought of how Bai Xiaochun’s pills could affect him caused his killing intent to grow stronger by the moment. By this point, the chase had led to the border of the plain, where it began to give way to the jungle.

Master Cloud Lightning’s relentless pursuit had pushed Bai Xiaochun into a state of madness, and he was just preparing to go all out by using his Godkiller technique.

However, just as he was about to destroy a drop of Undying Blood, he suddenly saw a group of people off in the distance....

He recognized them immediately. Du Lingfei was there, as well as that strange young man, the two of them flanked by a handful of special guards. By now, it had been several months since he had first encountered them.

Almost as soon as he caught sight of them, Du Lingfei saw him, and her eyes widened at the sight of Master Cloud Lightning chasing him with murderous intentions.

Master Cloud Lightning also noticed Du Lingfei and her group.

Having been a deva patriarch in the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect for many years, he was very well aware of Du Lingfei's status. Even if he were more powerful than he currently was, he wouldn't dare to do anything rash in front of her. Therefore, he slowed down a bit in his pursuit of Bai Xiaochun, although he didn't stop completely.

In his opinion, the grudge between himself and Bai Xiaochun was a personal matter, and Heavenspan Island usually didn't interfere in such things. As long as he acted respectfully, he could continue his chase. However, he did prepare a quick explanation.

Not forgetting to clasp his hands as he continued to give chase, he addressed Du Lingfei in respectful fashion and said, "Goddess Du, this matter between Bai Xiaochun and myself is--"

However, before he could finish his statement, Bai Xiaochun interrupted him with words that nearly caused him to fall out of the sky....

"Wifey, save me! Save me, oh my wifey of mine!"

Then he shot toward Du Lingfei and her group at top speed.

His voice rang out loud and clear for everyone to hear, and brimmed with profound passion and sincerity.

As soon as Du Lingfei heard Bai Xiaochun's words, her jaw dropped. And there was little need to mention the special guards around her. Their eyes went wide with disbelief as they stared at Bai Xiaochun rushing toward them.

As for the young man in the group, he looked at Bai Xiaochun with a cold gaze.

However, the shock Master Cloud Lightning felt surpassed the combined shock of everyone else. He was dumbfounded, completely swept away, even more so than he had been by the chaos of the Breakup Pill. Shivering incredulously, he tried to determine whether or not he had just heard correctly....

Stammering, he said, "Wh-what... what did you just call Goddess Du...?"

Chapter 942: Frustrated Master Cloud Lightning

The words Master Cloud Lightning had just heard seemed almost completely impossible.

To see him reacting with such fright was very pleasing to Bai Xiaochun. Feeling very proud of himself, he hurried forward until he was right in front of Du Lingfei.

Puffing his chest out pompously, he turned to look at Master Cloud Lightning and loudly said, “Didn’t you hear what I just said!? This is my wifey! Hmmmphh! In that case, do you know who my father-in-law is?! Let me make it clear, Master Cloud Lightning. The reason I never mentioned this before is that I, Bai Xiaochun, am the type of person who likes to keep a low profile! But you had to go bully me left and right, leaving me no choice in the matter! I could only ask for my wifey to come save me. By this point, you’ve probably figured out who my father-in-law is, right? Yeah, exactly. He’s the master of Heavenspan Island, the exalted Celestial!”

Bai Xiaochun’s words crashed into Master Cloud Lightning like a mountain. His face fell, and his eyes bulged on the verge of popping out of his skull. His mind spun out of control, and his heart began to pound violently in his chest....

Never in his wildest dreams could he have imagined that the quarry he had been harrying would have an identity like this, a status and background of such import.... The idea that he had been trying to chase down and kill the son-in-law of the Celestial left him completely bowled over.

And yet, he still couldn’t quite accept the situation.

“I was just about to catch him! I was just about to put him to death.... Why? Why did this have to happen?!?!” Master Cloud

Lightning felt like his head was about to explode.

He wouldn't have believed it was true at all, except... that Du Lingfei simply stood there looking shocked, not offering a single word of rebuttal. In fact, what was worse was that a slight flush could be seen on her face as she looked over at Bai Xiaochun, a slight glare visible in her eyes.

The look on her face dashed any last strand of hope Master Cloud Lightning had left. Of course, there was no way he could have noticed the strange glint that flashed through the eyes of the young man when Bai Xiaochun mentioned that the Celestial was his father-in-law.

Bai Xiaochun was getting more excited at how stunned Master Cloud Lightning looked. At the same time, he wished that he could go on with more information and explain that he also had a demigod for a father-in-law, and that his apprentice was the Hell-Emperor. That would probably scare Master Cloud Lightning to death!

“Hmph! Now do you dare to provoke me?” The frustration and fear he had felt during the chase had now vanished, to be replaced by joy and delight.

He had truly been put into a bad position by Master Cloud Lightning, and had been unable to escape. In fact, he had nearly met his death, only to make a stunning comeback in which he seized the ultimate advantage.

“Things are not over between us, Master Cloud Lightning!” he said proudly, swishing his sleeve. “Were it not for the fact that I didn't want to reveal my identity, I would have long since killed you. And yet you repeatedly bullied me over and over again! I will not forget this. You just wait and see what happens in the end!”

As Bai Xiaochun spoke, louder and louder, Master Cloud Lightning's face drained of blood, and his eyes began to turn blank. To him, it was like existing inside of a dream.

“I... I offended the Celestial’s son-in-law....” He was afraid, truly afraid, so much so that he wanted to cry! After all, the Celestial was basically the emperor of the lands of Heavenspan, which meant that his son-in-law was essentially on the same level as a demigod. Master Cloud Lightning, on the other hand, was a lowly deva, a person who could be disposed of by a mere thought from a person like that.

“I....” Considering his current mental state, Master Cloud Lightning was incapable of maintaining his combined form. His two halves split apart, and then, ashen-faced and despairing, stepped forward with clasped hands. Bowing, they tried to offer explanations.

At around that time, the young man next to Du Lingfei cleared his throat and continued along as he had been before, completely ignoring Bai Xiaochun. Du Lingfei had recovered, and gave Bai Xiaochun an enigmatic smile. Then she turned to Master Cloud Lightning, the smile gone. Looking extremely lofty, she said coolly, “Fellow Daoist Cloud Lightning. Xiaochun loves to play pranks, so don’t take him too seriously. In terms of whatever grudge you have with him, the best thing would be to resolve the matter as soon as possible.”

Her words were spoken in a very formal tone, and seemed to imply that Bai Xiaochun’s words from moments ago had been a joke.

But Master Cloud Lightning didn’t take them that way. After all, he didn’t miss the fact that Du Lingfei had addressed him as Fellow Daoist Cloud Lightning, but had referred to Bai Xiaochun as... Xiaochun.

That revealed the truth about everything, and sent a tremor through Master Cloud Lightning. As for Du Lingfei, she was apparently worried that her message hadn’t come across clearly enough. Therefore, she walked over to Bai Xiaochun, straightened up his clothing, and then whispered a few words into his ear.

Then, she ignored Master Cloud Lightning as she caught up to the young man and the special guards.

The matter couldn't have been more clear now to Master Cloud Lightning, whose vision was beginning to go dim from the shock and terror.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he simply stood there and blinked a few times. Du Lingfei hadn't said anything special to him moments ago, just to stay safe, and that she still had some important business to attend to.

However, he was very pleased with the show she had put on. Crossing his arms, he stuck his chin up and looked arrogantly at the twin Master Cloud Lightnings.

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings were feeling completely overwhelmed with bitterness. They exchanged glances, neither of them quite sure about what to do now. They had been caught completely unprepared by this unexpected turn of events. In one moment, they had been shouting in triumph as they closed in for the kill, only to find the situation completely reversed the following moment.

Both of them howled with grief in their hearts, extremely displeased with how Bai Xiaochun had blatantly led them on. After all, if they had known the truth from the beginning, they would never have ended up in this horrible situation.

“This Bai character's true trump card isn't that fist strike, or that blood mist which causes him to lose consciousness. It's not even those weird medicinal pills of his. It's his relationship with the Celestial!

“What are we supposed to do now...?” As the twin Master Cloud Lightnings stood there feeling torn about what to do, Bai Xiaochun casually remained in place watching them, arms crossed. Occasionally he would snort coldly, but wouldn't say anything. In that way, he allowed the pressure to build up for the twin Master

Cloud Lightnings.

Under normal circumstances, they would have just turned and left. But they knew that they had offended Bai Xiaochun too deeply. Now that his identity had been revealed, they had to take their sect into consideration as well.

“Um... Bai, old pal, that was just a misunderstanding earlier....”

“Yeah, exactly. Hahaha! Our Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect has been good friends with your Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect for a long time....”

Both of the twin Master Cloud Lightnings felt very embarrassed at this point. Very rarely would they ever give up face in this manner, a fact which was obvious from both their words and the way they pursed their lips.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes widened into a glare. Obviously, the twin Master Cloud Lightnings were not being very sincere. However, he knew what to say and how to say it. These two were feeling very bitter about their loss, and therefore, it was probably best to quit while he was ahead. He cleared his throat.

“Very well. Since it was a misunderstanding, there's no need to bicker. However, that little chase of ours left me in pretty bad shape. I also lost a deva soul, as well as a manual for something called the One Hundred Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations. Ai.” Clearing his throat in meaningful fashion, he looked over at the twin Master Cloud Lightnings.

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings' hearts crumbled, and inwardly, they cursed Bai Xiaochun for his shamelessness. The divine ability to which he referred was a secret magic from the north, and wasn't something they could simply hand over to him, not even if they were in a passive position like they were now. However, they also realized that if they didn't surrender it, the situation would be difficult to resolve. Therefore, one of the twins produced a crystal from his bag of holding, within which was

sealed a deva soul.

“Eee? Oh, you did find my deva soul!” As it turned out, the Li Xiandao method actually worked quite well. Bai Xiaochun took the deva soul, examined it briefly, then frowned. “Fellow Daoists Cloud Lightning, you shouldn’t have! Oh, by the way, in addition to the lost deva soul, I also happened to lose a bunch of spirit stones. And seven or eight precious treasures. Plus a whole bunch of medicinal pills!” With that, he looked up unblinkingly.

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings felt like they were about to explode. However, they had no choice but to suppress their anger at the excessive demands.

“Dammit, why couldn’t this guy just die? With all the things he supposedly lost, he could fill a whole treasure house!”

No matter how frustrated they were though, they could only grit their teeth and gather all of the things he had demanded.

Bai Xiaochun was feeling quite proud. Just when he was about to continue on in this fashion, the ground suddenly trembled as surely as if an earth dragon were moving about below.

Then, a massive, thunderous crash filled the air.

The energy released vastly surpassed that which had been released during the fight between Bai Xiaochun and Master Cloud Lightning. By about ten times! The plain, the jungle, the swamp and the desert... all began to shake violently!!

Something really big was happening!

Chapter 943: A Copper Coin!!

The entire trial by fire shook violently, including the desert, the swamp, the plain and the jungle!

Of the hundreds of Nascent Soul cultivators who had survived all of the dangers thus far, most had either gotten lucky, or possessed extraordinary cultivation bases or intelligence.

However, all of them were deeply shaken by what was happening. They weren't the only ones to react in such a way. The other living beings who existed within the trial by fire were trembling at the realization that a huge catastrophe was imminent. Soon, screams and cries began to rise up from within the lands of the trial by fire.

“What’s happening?!?!”

“The lands are quaking, and even the sky is churning. What’s going on!?”

By now, most of the surviving cultivators had gathered into groups of three, four, or five. Furthermore, many such groups had already set up methods of communicating with each other. After all, in a dangerous place like this where no one knew what exactly was going on, it was more important than ever to stay abreast of events elsewhere.

Therefore, many people began to pull out transmission jade slips and send messages back and forth.

Before long, shocking news began to spread....

“Someone... found the exit to the trial by fire. It's in the desert! However, a wall is blocking the way out, and we need to join forces to break through it!!” It was astonishing news. After all, because of how dangerous this trial by fire was proving to be, many people had already begun to give in to despair.

Now that the exit had been found, countless eyes went bloodshot.

Some people were still thinking about the prizes at stake, and others just wanted to escape. Either way, all of them began to head toward the desert.

Bai Lin, Zhao Tianjiao, and various other powerful experts from the other rivers all began to head in the same direction.

Master Thousand-Ghost was currently in the swamp when he got the news. His eyes flickered as he suddenly transformed into a mist of ghosts that headed toward the desert, taking Sun Wu, Big Fatty Zhang, and Song Que with him.

In the jungle, Guru Spirit Immortal from the Exalted Zodiac Moon Domination Sect transformed into a shooting star that split the air in the direction of the desert.

On the vast plain, Du Lingfei and her group all looked in the direction of the desert. The young man in the group was clearly very excited, and his eyes began to shine brightly.

“There it is... at long last!” He threw his head back and laughed uproariously, his energy surging, although he kept it suppressed. Finally, he flicked his sleeve, picking the rest of the group up with power far beyond that of a deva as he flew up into the air.

In that same moment, a young woman could be seen in the desert, sitting atop a huge sandworm, a broad smile covering her face. She waved her finger at the sandworm, which immediately withered up and transformed into black smoke that she absorbed into her finger. Shockingly, she was surrounded by tens of thousands of sandworms, although instead of their usual vicious deportment, they all were trembling in terror at her aura.

“I used to raise you little earthworms to feed my three ghosts. Who would ever have thought that you would grow up to be so big?” A smile spread out across the young woman’s fair face.

She was none other than... Hou Xiaomei!

However, if Bai Xiaochun were here to see her, he would

immediately recognize that her aura was not that of Hou Xiaomei!

“Well I guess it doesn’t matter... as long as I’m back.” She covered her smile with her hand, and yet, that didn’t conceal... her bizarre dual pupils!! Chuckling, she blurred into motion, heading toward the location of the exit that had been found in the desert.

As everyone in the trial by fire stirred into motion, Bai Xiaochun and the twin Master Cloud Lightnings both received messages via jade slip.

“Someone found the exit!” The twin Master Cloud Lightnings’ eyes went wide. Ignoring Bai Xiaochun, they both turned and blasted off into the distance.

The news had come to Bai Xiaochun from Big Fatty Zhang, who, thanks to Master Thousand-Ghost, was now able to send messages at a much greater range. Bai Xiaochun looked at the information, and his heart began to thump in his chest.

“The exit is in the desert? But I went through the whole desert and never found a thing!” He suddenly felt bad that he hadn’t taken a bit more time to thoroughly search the desert....

“Well, too late to worry about it now....” he thought, sighing. Of course, by this point, everyone in the entire trial by fire would be hurrying in the same direction.

Considering how far away he was right now, it didn’t seem there would be much of a chance to come out as a winner. Of all the places the exit could have appeared, why did it have to show up in the desert?

“Wait. No. There should still be time! I have to at least go check it out!” Gritting his teeth, he also began to speed toward the desert.

As he traveled along, strange things began to happen long before he even got close to the desert. Rumbling sounds echoed out, and a shocking aura began to fill the air.

Off in the direction of the desert, the sky had begun to turn

yellow, and furthermore, a brilliant light appeared that was apparently some sort of defensive shield.

The color of the sky and the defensive shield seemed to be connected in some way.

“What kind of place is this exit? Why does it have a shield?”

In almost the same moment that the shield appeared, the swamp, plain, and jungle all began to rot and wither!

In the plain, over which Bai Xiaochun currently flew, the grass began to dry up and die, revealing black soil beneath. The living beings that remained in the plain all trembled and passed away. The entire plain... was transforming into a land of death!!

Even the black soil seemed to lose any life that was in it. It began to dry up and crack....

Bai Xiaochun was completely shaken by what he was seeing.

It wasn't just the plain. Any living beings that remained in the swamp were dying, and the swamp itself was going dry. Cracking sounds could be heard as crevices opened up everywhere....

It was also the same in the jungle.

It only took a few breaths' worth of time for the entire trial by fire, with the exception of the desert, to be transformed into a realm of death!

Bai Xiaochun wasn't the only one to be shocked by this. All of the cultivators hurrying toward the desert felt very ill premonitions because of the withering, dying lands around them.

“What the hell kind of place is this?!”

A powerful aura of death began to fill the air, causing the entire world they were in to begin to grow dark and sinister, as if it were a realm of ghosts!

Everything was happening too quickly. Within moments, no clouds were visible in the sky, only turbid darkness filled with the

faint images of evil ghosts, who looked down on the land with greed and hunger!

Because of how the other three areas were withering and dying, the brightly lit desert became more eye-catching than ever.

By now, the cultivators flying toward the desert had abandoned all thoughts of becoming some apprentice of the Celestial. They just wanted to escape with their lives!

Bai Xiaochun was so nervous he was panting. Furthermore, he was actually familiar with this particular sinister aura, although right now he was too flustered to think about that. After a few hours passed, he was in the swamp, continuing on toward the desert, when he noticed something off in the distance!

A spot of white light could be seen on the ground, very eye-catching because of the darkness around it. Before, the swamp had been filled with murky liquid and decomposing soil. Because of that, this light hadn't been visible. But now... with the lands withering away, and crevices opening up everywhere... that white light was very conspicuous.

“What's that?” Bai Xiaochun thought, surprised. He changed directions, flying over until he was above the very spot with the light. At that point, the ground shook, shifting the soil to reveal... a magical device!!

It was... a copper coin!!

The instant Bai Xiaochun saw that, his eyes went as wide as saucers, and his mind began to spin!

“Impossible!!”

Note from Er Gen: Guess whose copper coin that is? It's been there for a while now. Hahaha!

Chapter 944: I Took A Wrong Turn...

Bai Xiaochun hovered there panting, his mind reeling and his heart racing. Never could he have imagined that something like this would happen. It was true that he was shocked by how dangerous the trial by fire had turned out to be, but this new development surpassed anything and everything in terms of how astonishing it was.

The truth was that... this copper coin left him completely and utterly flabbergasted, to the ultimate degree!

Even after a very long moment passed, he wasn't even close to calming down. Eventually, he made a beckoning gesture with his right hand, causing the copper coin to fly up into his palm. Then he looked at it closely, during which time his expression flickered with a variety of thoughts.

"How is this even possible...?" he murmured. The copper coin that rested in his palm was none other than... the copper coin which had once belonged to Master God-Diviner!!

Engraved on the surface of the coin was his very name! Master God-Diviner!

Bai Xiaochun clearly remembered the moment in which Master God-Diviner lost this coin, and how he had howled in grief....

As his fingers closed around the coin, he began to shiver uncontrollably, and think back to the moment when he, Master God-Diviner, and Song Que had been traversing the Deadmire. They had been sucked onto the strange bone galleon, whereupon Bai Xiaochun suggested to Master God-Diviner that he perform a divination to figure out how to escape. Master God-Diviner had pulled out this very copper coin, but had dropped it, whereupon it fell into a crack on the deck of the ghost galleon....

Even after descending into the lower decks of the galleon, Bai

Xiaochun had never seen the coin again. It had vanished without a trace.

But now... here in this trial by fire, he found it!

Shivering and shaking, he looked up into the sky, feeling as cold as ice.

“What is this place...?” he thought, swallowing hard as he looked at the murky, leaden sky. All of a sudden, an idea popped into his head, an idea which, as he continued to think about it, caused his face to drain of blood.

“Don’t tell me that this trial by fire... is actually located... inside of that bone galleon?!?” Mind reeling, he tried to convince himself that it couldn’t be possible. After all, Heavenspan Island with its trial by fire, and the Deadmire with its bone galleon, were two different locations.

No matter how he tried to reconcile it, it seemed impossible to connect the two together. How could the bone galleon and the trial by fire possibly be linked?

But... the presence of the copper coin seemed to indicate otherwise!

“If this place is part of that bone galleon, then that could explain why the Celestial sent the cultivators from the four rivers here to find an exit. It would also explain that extremely jarring teleportation we experienced.” The more he pondered the subject, the more alarmed he became, and the more he came to be convinced that there was a monumental secret tied up within this trial by fire.

But what was the secret?!

The truth was that he actually didn’t want to know. He couldn’t ever forget what he had seen on deck 3 of that bone galleon: a vanity, with... a faceless, one-armed ghostess sitting in front of it!

“It’s a good thing I had Great-Grandpa Gravekeeper’s command

medallion to protect me!” He absentmindedly rubbed his bag of holding, where that very same command medallion still resided. At that point, he breathed a sigh of relief. However, the thought of the ghostess still caused his hair to stand on end.

“Maybe I’m overthinking things....” he thought, scowling on the verge of tears. However, it was at this point that he remembered seeing the bone galleon later on in the Deadmire, and realizing that it clearly had more than three decks....

At that point, his fear grew more intense, and he looked up at the sky again, expression that of disbelief.

“Don’t tell me... that we’re below deck 3?” Not wanting to sit around thinking about the matter, he hurried onward. And yet, he couldn’t clear his thoughts.

“It must be a coincidence.... Wait, hold on. If this is really the bone galleon, and the copper coin fell down through a hole in the deck, then that hole should still be there. If I can’t find any hole, then... then it means I’m just thinking too much into it....” Taking a deep breath, he cautiously flew straight up into the sky.

Feeling so nervous he almost couldn’t breathe, he continued upward, higher and higher.

He didn’t move too quickly, and kept his divine sense spread out around him at all times to look for danger. At the same time, he searched for any holes or rifts that would indicate a passage to another location.

However, after searching about for some time, he didn’t find any such rift in the murky sky. Gradually, he began to relax a bit.

“Hahaha! I knew it was just a coincidence!” Forcing a smile onto his face, he continued to search back and forth for a bit, but didn’t find any evidence to support his theory. Even that couldn’t fully dispel his suspicions, though.

“Maybe it’s a different coin. Or maybe someone found it and

brought it here.” Neither option seemed very likely. However, he didn’t have any other evidence to work with. So after a bit more thought, he decided that the best thing would be to go see what was happening in the desert.

Having made up his mind, he took a deep breath and began to fly toward the desert. But then, a tremor ran through him, and his eyes widened.

Face falling, he craned his neck to look at a certain spot up ahead in the sky!!

Although that spot seemed ordinary in nature, when scanning it closely with divine sense... a rift was clearly visible!!

It wasn't very large, and it actually flickered in and out of existence. Without getting very close to it, and examining it with powerful divine sense, it wouldn't be visible. In fact, to Nascent Soul cultivators, it wouldn't be detectable at all.

Only a powerful deva expert like Bai Xiaochun, who was closely searching the area, would ever notice it.

“There really is a hole....” he thought, his heart starting to pound. He looked at the rift, and then looked down toward the general area where he had discovered the copper coin. After making a quick calculation, he threw the coin down in the same trajectory he guessed it would have fallen if it emerged from the rift. Sure enough, it landed only a few meters away from its original location....

His mind began to spin even more violently.

“It really is the bone galleon!!” he shrieked. To him, that rift was like a fiendish monster. After all, the bizarre nature of the bone galleon had left a deep and terrifying impression on him.

Whether it was the three ghost faces on the flags on the deck of the ship, the mural on deck 1, or the skeletons and rocking chair on deck 2, they all left him trembling in fear....

There was also how Song Que and Master God-Diviner had lost their minds, and the most nerve-wracking thing of all... the ghostly mother on deck 3!!

Bai Xiaochun was absolutely certain that, without the gravekeeper's command medallion, he would have most certainly died on the bone galleon.

"The thing about accepting a new apprentice was a complete smokescreen. The Celestial obviously had some other reasons for bringing the cultivators of the four rivers here to help him find the exit. He obviously couldn't get onto the bone galleon by going into the Deadmire, thus the use of teleportation. Furthermore, he apparently didn't dare to just come here by himself....

"All the evidence points to the conclusion that... he wants something inside the bone galleon, and is using the lower-level cultivators to get it!! In turn, that means... that the Celestial has been in the trial by fire all along!!" Shivering, he thought back to the young man who had been traveling with Du Lingfei.

"Back when I slapped that guy across the side of the head, I could tell that he didn't feel like a demigod...." Sweat began to pour down his face. "I actually slapped the Celestial....

"Wait, if the Celestial is here... then that means Gongsun Wan'er is probably here too!" The only person Bai Xiaochun feared more than the Celestial was Gongsun Wan'er. All of a sudden, he had no desire whatsoever to get out of the desert. He needed to find Big Fatty Zhang and his other friends, and then hide somewhere until the dust settled.

Even as he came to this conclusion, a mysterious and sinister voice suddenly echoed out from the rift he had just discovered.

"Now that you're here, why don't you come in and look around.... After all, this isn't your first time aboard."

Bai Xiaochun let out a yelp of shock, then began to stammer,

“This is a misunderstanding. That’s all, a misunderstanding....
Um... I took a wrong turn....”

Chapter 945: First Time Here?

Even as Bai Xiaochun attempted to flee, a powerful gravitational force emerged from the rift.

It didn't affect the air, or the ground below, or anything else in the entire world. Neither did it emit fluctuations that would be noticed by anyone else.

However... it did exert massive force on Bai Xiaochun, so much so that it felt as if his soul and cultivation base would be ripped out of him!

He could struggle against it, and perhaps escape, but in the process, his soul would be torn away from him and swallowed up by the rift!

To Bai Xiaochun's horror, he found that it was the same with his cultivation base, and even his blood. In fact, as he struggled, blood began to ooze out of his pores and fly through the air toward the rift.

It seemed like he might be torn to pieces at any moment. At the same time, though, the sinister, female voice continued to speak into his ear, describing what she clearly envisioned to be a most wonderful image.

“By all means, keep struggling. That will make it easier for me to absorb your divine soul, and your blood... and eventually, the only thing left behind will be a skeleton....”

“Save me some effort. Help me turn you into a most delectable feast....”

Bai Xiaochun screamed inwardly as he suddenly visualized... himself, with his divine soul sucked away, his cultivation base gone, bereft of blood, flesh, internal organs, and even his head.... The only thing left behind was a skeleton which crashed down onto the ground, held in place only because it was made of

Undying Bones....

Years later, a passerby would be overjoyed to find such a precious treasure, and would turn his skeleton into medicinal pills, or a magical item, or perhaps even a skeleton puppet....

“Nooo....” Slowly, his mind went blank because of the intense gravitational force. Soon, the power reached a point that defied imagination, and in despair, he stopped struggling. At that point, he became of streak of bright light that shot into the rift.

With Bai Xiaochun gone, the rift closed up and disappeared. The entire time, nobody noticed what had occurred, neither Du Lingfei nor the young man with her, both of whom were trying to break through the shield of light in the desert.

Also near that shield was Hou Xiaomei, her eyes gleaming with anticipation, but her brow slightly furrowed as she looked off in the direction of the swamp. A moment later, the shield in the desert trembled as though it might collapse, and Hou Xiaomei looked over at it, the anticipation in her eyes growing more intense.

“At long last... I can return.... I wouldn’t be doing this unless there were no other choice, Ghostmother.... I very much look forward to the joy on your face when you see me again....”

As the shield shook violently back in the desert, Bai Xiaochun’s vision was finally growing clear, revealing a very familiar scene....

He was in a room that looked very much like a lady’s bedchamber....

There was a bed covered in dust and cobwebs, a vanity, and a cracked mirror....

A scream escaped his lips, and he spun to leave, only to find that there was no exit in sight....

Seated at the vanity was a woman in a long, red gown. Her back was to him as she combed her hair and softly sang that familiar,

spine-tingling song....

Tears of terror threatened to spill out of Bai Xiaochun's eyes....

"What do I do, what do I do...!?" he thought. He felt like his scalp was about to explode, and wished for nothing more than to escape. And yet, there didn't seem to be any way to do that. Without any hesitation, he pulled out the gravekeeper's command medallion and gripped it tight in his hands.

"Don't eat me, Big Sis...." he blurted in a quavering voice. Not quite sure of what to say, he began to babble a bit. "Uh... do you know the gravekeeper? He's my Master! You and I are probably on the same team...."

"Oh, right. There are some people outside who mean you harm, Big Sis. Why don't you go check the situation out? No need to worry about me.... I didn't want to come here. You... you dragged me here, Big Sis...."

It was at this point that the woman's shoulder moved, as though she were about to turn and look at him.

"Don't look back!" he shrieked. "Just... don't look back. If you have anything to say, you can--"

In the middle of his sentence, the woman stopped singing. Continuing to comb her hair, she quietly said, "This is your first time here."

"Huh?" he replied. Then, he began to nod his head vigorously. "Um, if you say it's my first time here, Big Sis, then of course it's my first time...."

"Now that you're here," the woman said, her voice undulating in bizarre fashion, "I can't help but wonder what you're thinking about as you stand there...."

A look of confused surprise appeared on Bai Xiaochun's face. "Wait, first time? No, this is my second time. And you're the one who brought me here!"

“Nobody brought you here.... And your two friends are still right above us.” She waved her finger at the mirror, causing an image of the bone galleon’s deck 2 to appear. There, Song Que and Master God-Diviner stood on either side of the rocking chair, completely unmoving, blank looks on their faces.

The image, combined with the woman’s words, struck Bai Xiaochun like a thunderbolt, causing him to gasp.

“Impossible! How could this be happening...? I left this place. I went back to the River-Defying Sect. I went back to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. I... I was in a trial by fire. That’s how I got here....” Not only did he not trust the woman’s words, he refused to believe that everything that had happened after he left the bone galleon, including the events in the River-Defying Sect and the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, were all mere fantasies....

And yet, there was something strange about the woman’s voice which made it almost impossible to control his mind, and forced him to start thinking about the past.

As he did that, he unknowingly began to relax his grip on the command medallion....

“You never left....” the woman continued in her bizarre voice. Her shoulder trembled, and she slowly began to turn her head. However, she didn't stop combing her hair. In fact, she started combing it faster and faster....

She almost seemed to want to rip the hair out of her head! It was a bizarre scene that left Bai Xiaochun feeling profoundly shocked, but at the same time, somewhat blank.

“Anyone who looks at my face will descend into a fantasy of their own making.... This really is your first time here. However, it is not your first time... seeing my face.” As she spoke, her head continued to turn. Within moments... she would be facing him directly!

Bai Xiaochun's face was completely blank, and he was shivering. As he descended into chaotic memories, his grip on the command medallion loosened!

The command medallion dropped to the ground, and the woman turned completely around! Her face was featureless, to the point where it almost looked like a blank sheet of white paper!!

But then a slit spread out on her face, which opened into something like a bizarre mouth. Then she lunged toward Bai Xiaochun as if to swallow him.

In that moment... Bai Xiaochun suddenly stooped down and picked up the command medallion. When he looked up, his expression wasn't blank at all, and he was shoving the command medallion out toward the mouth!

"Since you're scared of this thing, let's see if you dare to eat it!" Everything from moments before had been an act! He had decided to throw caution to the wind and create an opportunity for himself!

Chapter 946: You're Not Hou Xiaomei!

It all happened in the time it takes a spark to fly off of a piece of flint. Furthermore, the long-haired woman had clearly never considered that her powerful divine ability actually wouldn't affect Bai Xiaochun.

However, she was an extraordinary being, and despite the fact that it seemed to Bai Xiaochun that she couldn't possibly avoid his strike, she actually chuckled, and then vanished into thin air.

A moment later, she reappeared back at her vanity, combing her hair. It was almost as if everything that had happened moments ago had been an illusion. As for Bai Xiaochun, he stood there, his face ashen and his heart pounding in his chest.

Actually, her divine ability hadn't been completely ineffective. Bai Xiaochun had indeed begun to slip into a strange state of thought. However, it had only lasted for a moment before the scrap of Willpower he had inside of him, which he had feared lost when he formed his Heaven-Dao Nascent Soul, suddenly reared up for a brief moment.

That brief moment was all the time he needed to recover his mental faculties. That was also when he quickly came up with the plan to make an opportunity for himself, and unleash a counter attack.

However, not even such preparations were effective against this woman. The fact that she had simply vanished and then reappeared back at the vanity left Bai Xiaochun feeling quite shaken.

"She didn't vanish because of her speed. No... she... looked like she actually went back in time to the moment from before!" The mere thought that this woman had such an incomprehensible magical technique filled him with even more alarm than before. Scowling on the verge of tears, he decided that he should try to

work things out with her.

Just as he opened his mouth, though, the woman chuckled.

“Interesting. No wonder the gravekeeper of this world picked you.... Your Will... is a bit different from the other people I've seen here.... Including you, there are two people on this ship that I'm particularly interested in....”

Bai Xiaochun stood there, confused by what exactly the woman was talking about. Suddenly, she turned her head again, not to look at him, but to look at a spot on the ground between the two of them!

Although the wood of the deck seemed ordinary in nature, as soon as she looked at it, it began to blur....

“Finally here....” she said, and her featureless face suddenly distorted, almost like a piece of paper being crumpled up. Gasping, Bai Xiaochun looked down at the ground.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

It was almost as if someone was attacking the ground from beneath. Massive force struck it, causing intense rumbling sounds to echo out as the floor of the bedchamber rocked violently. Then, another boom could be heard, and it shattered!

To Bai Xiaochun's shock, the woman began to laugh a bizarre, ghostly laugh. And at the same time, several beams of light shot up through the floor!

Although they looked like huge beams of light, they were actually thin threads, within which were cultivators! At first, they were very small, almost like miniature people, but moments later, they grew to normal size.

There were seven or eight of them, and all of them wore expressions of profound excitement.

“I'm first!!”

“Hahaha! I'm going to get a Millennial Longevity Pill!”

However, even as their voices and laughter continued to echo about, they looked around and saw where they were standing. They saw the vanity and the woman, and then the broken mirror. The woman turned, opened her gaping maw, and lunged at the entire group.

She was on them in the blink of an eye, and before they could even shout in alarm, they were swallowed up.

Then, crunching sounds rang out, sounds that caused Bai Xiaochun's spine to tingle, and his face to drain of blood.

Things weren't over yet, though. A moment later, a few dozen more people flew out, a second wave of cultivators.

“This place is dangerous!!” Bai Xiaochun shouted, looking over this second group. Then, it was to his profound anxiety that he realized he recognized one of the faces. “Xiaomei! Get out of here!!”

He was about to rush over to Hou Xiaomei when he realized that there was something very strange about her aura. And when he looked into her eyes, it was to his profound shock that he realized she had two pupils!

A bone-chilling laughter rang out that he found very familiar.

“I'm finally back!” Hou Xiaomei said. When he heard her voice, his eyes went wide with incredulity, and he stopped in place, beads of sweat popping out all over his head.

“That voice. That laughter.... You're... you're not Hou Xiaomei! You're Gongsun Wan'er!! What did you do to Hou Xiaomei!?!?”

The girl who appeared to be Hou Xiaomei was none other than Gongsun Wan'er, whose eyes shone with sinister light as she smiled and said, “You still remember me, sweetie? Don't worry, how could I possibly hurt your Xiaomei? I'm just standing in for her to play with you a bit.”

At this point, Gongsun Wan'er slowly turned to look at the woman sitting at the vanity, who was still combing her hair. Brow furrowed slightly, she said, "I really hate it when people use my vanity."

"This vanity is mine," the woman replied in a raspy voice. "And you... are also mine. Did you think that if you hid your soul in that body, and then masked your aura, I wouldn't know you had come?" Suddenly, that gaping maw appeared again, to lunge toward Gongsun Wan'er this time.

However, the instant the mouth appeared, Gongsun Wan'er chuckled, and sent out a stream of black smoke that became a gaping maw of its own.

Then, the two of them began to fight back and forth, right there in the bedchamber!

Booms rang out, and the room began to rock back and forth. The shockwaves of the fighting caused the newly arrived cultivators to cough up blood and stagger backward, their expressions filled with shock and confusion.

None of them understood why, after finding the exit to the trial by fire, they were suddenly in a lady's bedchamber, a bedchamber that was profoundly dangerous.

Bai Xiaochun's mind was in chaos; events were unfolding too rapidly to process. Despite his confusion, though, he could sense that there were two souls within Hou Xiaomei's body. One belonged to that bizarre girl, and the other, was Hou Xiaomei's true soul, although it was currently sealed and suppressed!

"Xiaomei...." Despite how anxious he felt, he knew that there was nothing he could do right now. The force being unleashed by the fighting flung him backward, where he slammed into the wall. Then, cracking sounds filled the air as the wall shattered!

Revealed beyond the wall was... a severely damaged staircase that

led to the deck above!

It was in this same moment that a third wave of cultivators shot up through the hole in the bedchamber. Included in that group were Du Lingfei and the young man.

In the moment that they burst onto the scene, an energy erupted out that seemed to shake the entire battleship, and it came from that young man.

In that moment, the young man's skin began to split and fall apart, as if he had been wearing it as an outer layer. A face appeared that seemed threatening without being angry, with eyes that contained heavenly bodies, and an aura that surpassed the most paragon entities in all heaven and earth. He was none other than...

“The Celestial!!” Bai Xiaochun shrieked in his heart. Although he had guessed that this would happen, to see his suspicions confirmed right in front of him caused him to suddenly think about what he had done so recently.

“I... I actually smacked the Celestial on the side of the head?!”

Chapter 947: Reasons

Bai Xiaochun was feeling torn in countless directions. On the one hand, he was worried about Hou Xiaomei. On the other hand, his palms itched at the mere sight of the Celestial....

It would be hard for him to be more anxious and more unsure of exactly what to do.

As the Celestial's energy rose higher and higher, he turned into a series of afterimages that shot toward the faceless woman. Snorting coldly, he said, "Did you think that hiding in the Deadmire would keep you safe, Ghostmother, you old bitch?! Did you really think I wouldn't be able to get to you?!"

The Celestial attacked, summoning a projection of the entire Heavenspan Realm and sending it shooting toward Ghostmother!

Gongsun Wan'er did the same thing. Together with the Celestial, she attacked Ghostmother with full force!

The sudden turn of events was too sudden. The vanity was instantly blasted to bits, and the resulting shockwave swept out, catching any cultivators who were too slow to react with deadly force. Miserable screams rang out as they were shredded to pieces!

However, Ghostmother managed to evade the attack. Vanishing, she reappeared off to the side, her face featureless, and yet contorted with rage.

"You're nothing but a quasi-celestial, Daoist Heavenspan. You aren't even capable of imagining what true celestials are like. The fact that you sacrificed your own people, and came in here in disguise, shows that you don't even deserve to be a true celestial. True celestials protect their people! Because of that point alone, it's clear the gravekeeper made the right decision to reject you.

"However, I do have to thank you for bringing this clone back to me, this clone formed from the very arm of mine that Gu Tianjun

severed with his sword!

“The whole reason I entered this place to begin with is because of this clone. She is the reason I was suppressed and limited by the gravekeeper and the will of this world. Here in the Deadmire, I’m unable to communicate with the world beyond, and unable to leave.... But now, things are coming to an end. You people have been waiting for me... and I’ve been waiting for you!” Ear-splitting laughter rang out from Ghostmother as she skirted the Celestial, and then shot toward Gongsun Wan’er. Although it was impossible to see her face, she seemed to radiate an air of excitement and anticipation.

“You deserve to be my clone, not the other way around!” shrieked Gongsun Wan’er. “We both want to get out of this world. We both want to get home! This time, I’m going to consume you, and I’m going to become the new Ghostmother!” Instead of evading, she actually sped up toward Ghostmother.

As the two of them began to fight back and forth, the Celestial snorted. He didn’t seem at all affected by Ghostmother’s snide comments from moments ago. Unfazed, he joined in the fighting, causing massive booms to rock the entire battleship. The bedchamber was being destroyed, and any cultivators who attempted to enter it and were struck by the fluctuations were instantly killed.

The battle between these three was the type that was far too dangerous for anyone to be present for. Even Bai Xiaochun, a deva with an incredibly tough fleshly body, was still coughing up blood, and was currently scrambling for the staircase.

That seemed to be the only exit. In fact, the surviving cultivators who could see it were all doing their best to reach it.

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings were among them, as was Guru Spirit Immortal from the Exalted Zodiac Moon Domination Sect. Both of them seemed to be in bad shape.

The fighting between the Celestial, Gongsun Wan'er, and the Ghostmother continued to intensify. At the moment, Heavenspan Seawater was forming into a fist-sized sphere that then began to accelerate toward Ghostmother.

Gongsun Wan'er, for whom this battle was supremely important, suddenly opened her mouth and spat out... a rusted sword! Intense pressure erupted off of the sword as it then shot toward Ghostmother.

This was the third time Bai Xiaochun had seen this sword. The second was during Gongsun Wan'er's battle with the gravekeeper, and the first time... was when he was a Foundation Establishment cultivator! It was... a sword which had fallen from beyond the heavens!!

It was the enormous sword... that contained the so-called Fallen Sword Abyss!!

“So, you took Gu Tianjun's sword and made it your own.... How amusing.” Chuckling, Ghostmother waved her hands out in front of her, causing ghost qi to erupt out in the form of a huge black hole which expanded out toward the Celestial and Gongsun Wan'er.

As the booms of battle rang out, Bai Xiaochun finally scrambled onto the staircase and, without the slightest hesitation, began to run up it.

Based on the conversation he was hearing, Bai Xiaochun was now getting a fairly good idea of what was going on.

“The Celestial never had any intention of accepting a new apprentice. And this didn't have anything to do with him restoring his cultivation base. In fact, it didn't even have anything to do with the four rivers. It was all... a plot revolving around the bone galleon!!

“Because the galleon is in the Deadmire, the Celestial can't reach

it by ordinary means. Therefore, he sent the cultivators of the four rivers into its depths... to find a way to get onto the main part of the ship by other means, and at the same time, remain undetected!”

By this point, Bai Xiaochun was also fairly certain of the origin of the bone galleon, and it left him completely and utterly shocked. After all, it was back in the Wildlands that he had learned... that another world existed beyond the heaven and earth in which he lived!

Many years ago, in that wider world outside, this Ghostmother had been sailing this bone galleon near the border of the Heavenspan Realm, and was then attacked by someone named Gu Tianjun. In the end, she took his sword, but not before he severed her arm!

Because of some strange circumstances, her severed arm somehow fell down into the Heavenspan Realm. That was also how the Fallen Sword World came to be....

Despite losing her arm, and having her cultivation base fall a bit, Ghostmother managed to escape. However, she couldn't bear to part with her arm, and had paid a spectacular price to re-enter the Heavenspan Realm and begin a search for it.

However, her interference was immediately detected by the gravekeeper, who embodied the will of heaven and earth. Calling upon his profound powers, he had sealed the vicious and crafty Ghostmother in the Deadmire!

There, she had been unable to communicate with the outside world, let alone return to it. At the same time, she was unable to search for her severed arm.... And thus she had remained sealed in the Deadmire for countless years.... Most likely, the gravekeeper had been at the peak of his power and strength when he created the seal which imprisoned her.

As for the enormous sword which had fallen from the heavens,

and the Heaven-Dao aura it contained, it ended up the eastern Lower Reaches, where it became a training ground for Foundation Establishment cultivators!

The countless souls that the sword had killed in the past were the banesouls which inhabited the Fallen Sword World. And one of them... was the incarnation of Ghostmother's arm!

That was the little girl that had possessed Gongsun Wan'er!

The soul that was the severed arm of Ghostmother had long remained inside the sword, unable to awaken, and unable to access its old memories. However, thanks to Bai Xiaochun's medicinal pills, that girl woke up!

After she recovered her memories, she wished to leave, and yet, had not been willing to return to her true self in the Deadmire. Instead, she entered into an alliance with the Celestial!

That huge battle which had been fought in the Wildlands had all been in the hopes of returning to her home in the outside world while her true form remained sealed!

It was a good plan, until the gravekeeper called upon the Five Yin Organs Secret Magic. That had been enough to seriously injure the girl clone, and send her fleeing from the scene of battle.

The gravekeeper had simply let her go, the reason being... that he had already made an agreement with Ghostmother! The two of them... would give that girl clone no choice but to opt for a second path!

That second path was another plan in which she and the Celestial would somehow sneak into the Deadmire and open a way into the depths of the bone galleon.

Then they would find an opening that led to deck 3! Their end goal was for the clone to consume her true form, become the new Ghostmother, and repay the Celestial in the only way she could.... After returning to her own peak cultivation base state, she would

take her ship and the Celestial... to the world beyond!

Clearly, the Celestial had reservations about the clone, and was worried she might have secret plans of her own. Therefore, he had sent a large group of cultivators into a supposed trial by fire. Not only would there be more people to find the passageway they were looking for, but the Celestial would be able to hide among them. In all aspects, it was much safer for him this way!

Furthermore, the reason why he had brought Hou Xiaomei to Heavenspan Island was because she was perfectly suitable to help Gongsun Wan'er hide her aura and arrive undetected by Ghostmother.

And of course, little did the Celestial and the clone know that the entire thing was an elaborate trap!

Chapter 948: The Deadmire

That was Bai Xiaochun's assessment based on everything he had heard just now, as well as the things he had learned back in the Wildlands.

Even if his analysis was not completely accurate in every aspect, he was confident that it was relatively correct....

And he couldn't help but think about the gravekeeper.... The truth was that, even back in that spectacular battle in the Wildlands, everything had gone according to the gravekeeper's plans!

"He really set everything up perfectly!!" Bai Xiaochun knew that the gravekeeper had actually hoped to kill the Celestial during that battle. Now, it seemed obvious... that the gravekeeper's killing intent was showing through in this backup plan!

This situation with the bone galleon had only unfolded because of the original failure to put an end to the Celestial!

"That's why he gave me his command medallion. It was to keep me safe as I passed through the Deadmire, but also... to make sure I wasn't killed during the final phase of this plan with the Celestial!" Bai Xiaochun was completely shocked, and simply couldn't imagine what kind of mind could come up with such a convoluted and meticulous plan!

"The Celestial... is definitely going to lose again!" After all of these realizations, Bai Xiaochun was feeling more and more uneasy. He didn't care about the Celestial, and was fairly certain that the man would be able to keep Du Lingfei safe. What Bai Xiaochun was worried about was Hou Xiaomei.

"Back when I saw Hou Xiaomei on Heavenspan Island, I don't think she had been possessed. But the next day... that strange, sinister aura I sensed was no illusion!

“Just now, there were definitely soul fluctuations inside of her body, which means she hasn’t been completely consumed.... The only way to save her is to get her soul out of that body!” Unfortunately, it was to his bitterness that he realized that his current cultivation base wasn’t high enough for him to participate in the fight.

Even the shockwaves from the fighting were too destructive for him to handle. Vision swimming, he stumbled up the staircase, leaving deck 3. At the top of the stairs, he looked around and found that he was on deck 2!

He almost turned to head back down the stairs. However, based on the fluctuations coming from the fighting down there, he knew that he couldn’t go back. Even as he stood there trying to decide what to do, the twin Master Cloud Lightnings stumbled out of the staircase, followed by Guru Spirit Immortal. As for the other Nascent Soul cultivators who had entered the bedchamber during the fighting, most had been killed by the destructive shockwaves of the battle.

The Celestial had placed Du Lingfei and her group into his bag of holding, keeping them safe.

Deck 2 was just like Bai Xiaochun remembered it. The rocking chair was there, slowly moving back and forth, with the two corpses kneeling in front of it in their strange, partially-fused state. Everything else was rife with sinister frigid qi.

But there was something different about the situation this time. Bai Xiaochun was no longer in the Nascent Soul stage. After glancing at the scene, he sent his divine sense out and onto the rocking chair. In that instant, it stopped moving.

He took a step closer.

Last time, he had been very interested in the two corpses, and had been almost fatally attracted to the auras of the Undying Codex and the Live Forever Codex which remained on them.

Unfortunately, at that time, he had not possessed a deva cultivation base, and had been virtually overwhelmed by fear and a sensation of crisis. As a result, he had eventually just fled for his life.

But this time, things were different. He was well aware that he would most likely not get a third chance to observe this scene, and therefore, he needed to take advantage of the moment.

Without any more hesitation, he hurried over toward the rocking chair. As for the twin Master Cloud Lightnings and Guru Spirit Immortal, they reacted differently. This was their first time here, so as soon as they stepped out into the room, they looked around in shock.

By the time they noticed Bai Xiaochun, he had already reached the skeletons and grabbed ahold of them. In that moment, his expression flickered.

The moment he touched the skeletons, he could sense the Undying Blood inside of him suddenly surge to life. At the same time, a majestic sensation of qi and blood erupted from the golden corpse which had cultivated the Undying Codex. That aura immediately rushed into his hand, and a moment later, he had another drop of Undying Blood inside of him!!

He couldn't have been more shocked by what happened. However, now was not the time to think about practicing cultivation. Therefore, he suppressed his surprise and quickly put the two corpses into his bag of holding.

“What was that you just grabbed, Bai Xiaochun!?” Guru Spirit Immortal said, his eyes glittering. Despite the fact that they were in a moment of critical danger, the old man still could not suppress his greed.

As for the twin Master Cloud Lightnings, if they hadn't already come to know a bit about Bai Xiaochun's background, they would have reacted the same way. But right now, with the Celestial only

one deck below, they didn't dare.

Bai Xiaochun completely ignored Guru Spirit Immortal. After putting the corpses into his bag of holding, he shot toward the next staircase. Last time, he had been unable to return to deck 1, but now that he had a deva cultivation base, he was able to identify the method to do so.

However, even as he began to move, Guru Spirit Immortal stepped over to block his way.

“We're all devas here, Bai Xiaochun! Since we all arrived at the same time, we should split any treasure evenly! You think you can just take it all for yourself?!”

“Screw the hell off!” Bai Xiaochun was worried about Hou Xiaomei, and was also privy to many other secrets that no one else was aware of. Therefore, he had no patience to deal with an irritating old man like this.

He immediately utilized his Mountain Shaking Bash, shooting forward with incredible speed, and simultaneously unleashing shocking pressure. Guru Spirit Immortal's face fell, and he quickly dodged to the side.

With that, Bai Xiaochun passed him and sped up the staircase.

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings followed behind, and Guru Spirit Immortal did as well, with various expressions flashing across his face.

In almost the exact same instant that Bai Xiaochun stepped onto deck 1, deck 2 exploded, sending wood splinters flying around in all directions. At the same time, the fight between the Celestial, Gongsun Wan'er, and Ghostmother spilled over into the former location of deck 2.

Deck 1 looked just like it had before, without the slightest change. The fascinating, life-like mural could still be seen on the bulkheads. Of course, Bai Xiaochun had already looked at it in the

past. Therefore, he barely glanced at it before rushing toward the next set of stairs, which led up to the main deck.

As soon as the twin Master Cloud Lightnings and Guru Spirit Immortal reached deck 1 though, they were immediately drawn into the mural.

Bai Xiaochun ignored them. In the blink of an eye, he was in the cabin above deck 1, and then... out on the main deck of the bone galleon!

The sky was murky and dim, and the ship was surrounded by a sea of bones. There were three flags visible, with three enigmatic ghost faces on them, rippling despite the lack of any wind.... Because of everything he had seen, because of the pressure weighing down on him, and because of the aura of the Deadmire that he recognized, the final, last bit of hesitation in him disappeared.

“We really are back in the Deadmire....” he murmured. Even as he looked around, the twin Master Cloud Lightnings and Guru Spirit Immortal stumbled out onto the deck, coughing up mouthfuls of blood.

Moments later, three other figures burst out onto the main deck!

“You can’t escape, Ghostmother!” Gongsun Wan’er shrieked. “I will consume you!!” As she shot toward Ghostmother, the expressionless Celestial also advanced. Between the two of them, they continued to shove Ghostmother backward across the battlefield!

Moments later, the handful of lucky cultivators who had survived the trial by fire began to emerge. When they found themselves on the main deck, and saw the fight going on in the air above them, they trembled with shock, and some even cried out loud in alarm.

“Heavens! That’s... that's the Celestial!!”

“Where... where are we?!”

“The exit led to a ship? How is that possible?!?! What is this place? Are we even still in the lands of Heavenspan...?” Bai Lin and Zhao Tianjiao were present, although they were badly injured, and were being held up by Big Fatty Zhang.

The only one who didn't react with complete surprise was Song Que.... Trembling, he looked around in disbelief, and then glanced over at Bai Xiaochun for confirmation.

“We're in the Deadmire.” Bai Xiaochun said, his mood dropping rapidly with every moment that passed.

Chapter 949: As Arrogant As Him!

In response to Bai Xiaochun's words, the surrounding cultivators gasped in shock.

“The Deadmire?!?!”

“That region which connects the Heavenspan region and the Wildlands? That Deadmire?!”

“Heavens! I can't believe we ended up here!!”

These were all Nascent Soul cultivators who had experienced the deadliness of the trial by fire, and were now bearing witness to a battle involving the Celestial himself. Therefore, to hear that they were also in the Deadmire pushed them toward the brink of mental collapse.

The danger they had come to face surpassed anything they could have imagined before setting out on this endeavor.

No one could possibly have known that the supposed trial by fire was actually taking place in the depths of an enormous bone galleon, much less that the Celestial's proclamation of accepting a new apprentice was actually a complete sham!

Perhaps to call it a 'sham' was a bit of an exaggeration. Presumably, the Celestial would indeed select an apprentice after the matter was ended. But for all intents and purposes, the cultivators who had been brought here were being used through and through. It was a feeling that left them feeling profoundly cold inside, although they didn't dare to reveal that openly.

Now they were here in the Deadmire, a fact that caused despair to stab deep into their hearts. Meanwhile, up above them, the Celestial and Gongsun Wan'er were teaming up against Ghostmother in a battle of completely epic proportions.

Booms rang out constantly, causing the bone sea that filled the Deadmire to ripple and distort. Many of the bones shattered, as did

the sky above.

The Celestial's Daoist magic sent a shocking projection of the Heavenspan Sea into action, and Gongsun Wan'er was going all out, fighting with even more ferocity than she had displayed in her battle with the gravekeeper. She was holding nothing back in her attempt to consume Ghostmother.

Bai Xiaochun was feeling very nervous as he craned his neck to observe the fighting overhead. Of course, he didn't care at all about Ghostmother and the Celestial, only Hou Xiaomei. Unfortunately, he didn't qualify to participate in the battle.

Even as he looked on, the Celestial's eyes glittered, and he shouted, "Don't forget our agreement! I'm going to do everything in my power to make sure you complete your fusion!"

As his words echoed about like thunder, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture, which caused the Heavenspan Sea projection to transform into a sealing mark that shot toward Ghostmother.

This was the most powerful move the Celestial had used so far. The truth was that he had actually been significantly injured during the fight with the gravekeeper, and although he had suppressed those injuries, his battle prowess had been significantly reduced because of it.

But now, he was sparing no cost to attack with full force.

As the weight of the Heavenspan Realm weighed down, massive winds screamed, and the Deadmire trembled. Meanwhile, the converged waters of the Heavenspan Sea seemed to have locked Ghostmother in place. Although she had no facial features, her face was clearly contorted with rage.

Reaching out to point at Ghostmother, the Celestial said, "You are within my world now, and you will be weak!"

The projection of the Heavenspan world flickered, causing

Ghostmother's aura to slowly weaken.

"You're mine, Ghostmother!" Gongsun Wan'er shrieked, turning into a blur of afterimages that shot through the air to appear directly in front of her rival. There, she spat out masses of black smoke, which formed into the face of a girl. Looking profoundly excited and greedy, the girl opened her mouth and lunged at Ghostmother.

In that critical moment, Ghostmother's voice suddenly floated out, soft, but somehow sly and treacherous. "Are you talking to me, Daoist Heavenspan? Or her?"

Then she performed a double-handed incantation gesture, sending black smoke pouring out of her hands to form countless evil ghosts, which smashed into the world projection.

Gongsun Wan'er's eyes flickered, and the Celestial frowned.

"Another useless move?" the Celestial said, snorting coldly. Taking a step forward, he waved his right arm out in front of him, causing the air to distort and winds to scream as an enormous hand appeared. Radiating shocking power, the hand shot directly toward Ghostmother.

The world projection began to shrink down, and the Celestial's all-destructive hand closed in. Ghostmother's aura was weakening by the moment. In that dangerous juncture, Ghostmother went still, then let loose a piercing scream.

"Heavenly Ghosts Slaughter the World!" Suddenly, her body shattered into pieces, which became roiling black smoke that spread out in a ring, in two rings, then in three rings. Soon, nine rings of black smoke had formed, in the middle of which was an evil ghost.

Looking profoundly shocking, the ghost roared and began to charge forward. At the same time, the rings of black smoke began to spin rapidly, transforming into something like a tornado!

The nine-layered tornado emanated a terrifying aura that struck fear into Bai Xiaochun's heart. It seemed like the type of thing that could destroy all magical laws in heaven and earth, including the world projection that had been unleashed by the Celestial.

When the Celestial's enormous hand slammed into the tornado created by Ghostmother's divine ability, it was the Celestial's attack that shattered. Then, the black smoke from the tornado swirled back into the shape of Ghostmother.

However, she looked blurrier than before, and was also retreating at top speed.

"So, Daoist Heavenspan, you really can call upon the power of this world. I underestimated you!" Even as Ghostmother retreated, Gongsun Wan'er picked up speed, becoming almost nothing more than a huge mouth of smoke as she got closer and closer.

Moments later, the weakened Ghostmother began to fight with Gongsun Wan'er, a sight which was completely riveting to both Bai Xiaochun and the rest of the crowd.

Bai Xiaochun was actually less shocked than everyone else. After all, this was not his first time witnessing the Celestial, and the way he wielded the power of the world via projection.

Clearly, the Celestial had managed to weaken Ghostmother enough to give Gongsun Wan'er an advantage. Gongsun Wan'er continued to try to consume Ghostmother, whose aura weakened with every moment that passed!

Normally speaking, Gongsun Wan'er would never have been a match for Ghostmother. If control over one's soul could be described with percentages, then Gongsun Wan'er only had about twenty percent control, whereas Ghostmother had eighty.

But now... as Gongsun Wan'er harried Ghostmother, she rose from twenty percent to thirty. And then forty. And finally... fifty percent!

Ghostmother was clearly feeling very anxious, and was having a very difficult time escaping because of the pressure of the world projection.

As for the Celestial, he hovered in midair watching the scene with cold eyes. He didn't step in to help directly, but continued to send pressure weighing down through the world projection. This same technique had been unable to control the gravekeeper, the reason being that both the Celestial and the gravekeeper were of this world. But when it came to people who were not of this world, the power of the world had the advantage.

Various emotions flickered across Bai Xiaochun's face. The truth was that he didn't know who he supported in this fight. The only thing he did know was that he feared for Hou Xiaomei's safety.

Before long, Gongsun Wan'er had sixty percent control, as well as the clear advantage. At that point, a cold smile appeared on the Celestial's face.

"It seems Ghostmother really is weakening," he murmured to himself. "If this is some sort of trick, then I have to say, it's a very daring one. And if I lose to it, well, I'd have no choice but to accept it." After a moment, his eyes flashed with determination. Then, in the moment in which Gongsun Wan'er reached seventy percent control, he spread his arms wide and spoke in a voice that seemed to represent the world itself!

"Slave Seal, activate!" The world projection twisted and distorted, and in the blink of an eye, transformed into an enormous sealing mark that descended toward Gongsun Wan'er!

The sealing power on display was fearsome to say the least, and even contained the power of time. Clearly, there was energy at play which had been building up for a long time!

Bai Xiaochun could sense that fact, and was shocked. Although he didn't recognize this sealing mark, he could tell that if it landed on Gongsun Wan'er, there would be no way for her to resist it, and

she would definitely become the Celestial's slave!

And that was the Celestial's true plan. A person as arrogant as him, the ruler of an entire world, couldn't possibly put all his hopes in a person who might not win in the end. After all, how could he be sure that Gongsun Wan'er would actually take him with her when she left? However... if he sealed her and made her his slave, then he could be completely certain of the final outcome!

The sealing mark was incredibly powerful, and truly had taken a long time to prepare. In fact... he had begun to prepare it years ago, back when they first met and had begun working out the plan that culminated in this epic battle in the Wildlands!

Chapter 950: One Divine Ability After Another!

As the sealing power erupted out, the world projection became like a dome, both enveloping Gongsun Wan'er, and rapidly shrinking down around her.

As could be imagined, once it shrank down enough, Gongsun Wan'er would become a slave of the Celestial!

Strangely, Gongsun Wan'er didn't seem surprised at all by what was happening. Eyes shining with strange light, she said, "You've been preparing for quite some time, haven't you, Daoist Heavenspan, you bastard. You were waiting until the moment I began to consume my primary form?"

"But did you really think I wouldn't be ready for something like this...? You're a real joke, you know that? Remember... the reason for your defeat is that you don't truly understand the world you exist in, and also... because you have no idea how powerful the bone galleon really is!!" Shrill laughter rang out from Gongsun Wan'er's lips as the bone galleon beneath the feet of Bai Xiaochun and the other cultivators suddenly trembled.

Black light began to spill out from every bone that made up the galleon, which swirled and formed together into a beam that shot toward the eight trigrams mirrors above the cabin door.

"I didn't need to even prepare for this moment, Daoist Heavenspan, you bastard. Back when we were fighting the gravekeeper, you didn't dare to try to seal me, but now... you feel confident. Unfortunately, you had no idea that... all I needed was this very bone galleon! I am Ghostmother's severed left arm, and that left arm... controls the sealing magic contained within this battleship! The truth is that I've also been waiting... for you to attack me!

“Devil-Conquering Mirror! I summon thee!”

More laughter erupted from Gongsun Wan’er as the black light from the ship was sucked into the eight trigrams mirror. Then the mirror began to vibrate, after which it shot into the air, a streak of black light that headed directly toward the Celestial.

A grim expression overtook the Celestial’s face as he waved his right hand out in front of him. Heaven and earth trembled, and yet, the intense black light did not shatter. However, it was shoved backward, whereupon it formed together into an enormous figure!

It was a hulking warrior clad in black armor, with green, flaming eyes. Based on the fluctuations rolling off of him, this figure did not originate in the Heavenspan Realm.

After forming, the warrior immediately closed in on the Celestial again.

“Power. Energy. Harmony. Healing....” After uttering these words, the black-armored warrior’s energy began to rise rapidly. At the same time, he shot toward the world projection sealing mark.

Energy radiated out that could end the heavens and crush the earth as, to the shock of Bai Xiaochun and all the onlookers, the world’s sealing power began to weaken!

An extremely unsightly expression appeared on the Celestial’s face. Although he had known all along that, while he was plotting against Gongsun Wan’er, she would likely be plotting against him, he had never imagined that her plan would be to use the bone galleon itself against him!

If he hadn’t been so badly injured back in the Wildlands, he would have had many tools at his disposal to deal with the situation. But his cultivation base was currently unstable, and his battle prowess significantly weakened. As such, his rage continued to build.

“Well, even still, it doesn’t matter.... It’s not like I only have one trick up my sleeve!” Eyes flashing, he waved his right index finger... which flew off of his hand and rapidly transformed into an enormous boulder!

It was dark violet, and other than being one of the Celestial’s actual fingers, didn’t seem extraordinary in any way. However, it did emanate an aura that led everyone who sensed it to gasp!

It was an aura that seemed capable of crushing all types of fiends and devils!

It immediately flew up to the world projection seal, fusing into it to bolster its power. Then, the incredible sealing power shot toward the black-armored warrior, who was incapable of standing up to it, and was forced backward across the field of battle.

“Heavenly devil stone!” Gongsun Wan’er blurted, her face falling dramatically. “Dammit! Even outside of this world, heavenly devil stones are rare! How did you get one?!?!”

Even where she came from, heavenly devil stones were objects not often seen, and using them required a massive wastage of resources.

Using such an object on one’s own people was useless. But using it on cultivators from other worlds was especially effective, and could easily suppress them!

It was a moment of profound crisis, forcing Gongsun Wan’er to abandon her attempts to consume Ghostmother. Howling, she performed an incantation gesture with her right hand and then waved her finger through the air to summon the ancient sword of Gu Tianjun, which came from beyond the heavens. Grabbing it in her hand, she slashed it at the incoming sealing mark!

At the same time, the black-armored warrior erupted into flames, and his green, fiery eyes burned hotter than ever.

[“Intuition. Awareness. Dimension. Creation. Absolute!!”](#) The

black-armored figure's aura erupted with insane power, causing cracks to spread out all over it. As that happened, energy from outside of the world began to spill out of him.

Apparently, it was actually burning itself up to acquire an explosive burst of power to use in a deadly attack!

As the warrior began to grow blurry, his energy rose up into the sky, where a huge vortex formed. Through that vortex, it was possible to see what could only be the world beyond this heaven and earth. By destroying itself, the black-armored warrior was able to draw upon magical law that did not conform to the Heavenspan Realm!

If that magical law arrived and collided with the magical and natural laws of the Heavenspan Realm, even for the slightest moment... the resulting detonation could very likely be enough to break the world projection seal!

The scene playing out for Bai Xiaochun and the others on the battleship was almost too much to take in. In one moment, the Celestial and Gongsun Wan'er had been working together, only to have the situation suddenly reversed.

Ghostmother seemed too weak to do anything, whereas Gongsun Wan'er, who was Ghostmother's left arm, and could control the sealing power of the bone galleon, was going to the lengths of destroying the treasure that was the eight trigrams mirror. By combining the power from beyond the heavens with the sword she held in her hand, she was preparing to break the sealing mark that continued to descend onto her.

As for the Celestial, despite having been so badly wounded in the Wildlands, he had come to this conflict fully prepared. Not only had he unleashed the sealing mark that was the world projection, but he also had a heavenly devil stone. Both of those were weapons specifically targeting Gongsun Wan'er, and were things that he was confident she couldn't evade while in the middle of consuming

Ghostmother.

At the moment, it was impossible to say who had the advantage. As the black-armored warrior collapsed to pieces, and the natural and magical laws from the outside world descended, Gongsun Wan'er drew them into her sword and prepared to slash at the sealing mark....

Which was when everything suddenly changed!!

A scornful smile spread out on the Celestial's face as he coolly said, "Considering how long that sword has been in my world, did you really think... that you could control it so easily? I just let you think you could!"

His eyes suddenly shone with bright light, light that seemed to perfectly match the light shining off of the sword! Then, he extended his left hand and waved his finger at the sword!

Gongsun Wan'er's face flickered, but before she could actually do anything in response, she lost control of the sword! The point suddenly swiveled and flew, not toward her, but toward the huge vortex up in the sky!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were wide as saucers. The moment was so tense that he forgot to breathe. The twists and turns in this battle were almost too much for him to process. Everyone had so many plots and schemes going that it was hard to understand it all. It was especially shocking that the Celestial had actually secretly gained control of the fallen sword years ago, but left it there and allowed Gongsun Wan'er to awaken and fuse with it....

Bai Xiaochun shivered at how adept the Celestial was at hatching complex plots. It was really terrifying!

"Just how many years has he been planning all of this? Don't tell me he knew that Gongsun Wan'er would wake up from the very beginning?"

"No!!" Gongsun Wan'er screamed despairingly. The sword

moved with incredible speed, like an arrow shooting up to pierce the sky. And as soon as it reached the vortex, it exploded!

Terrifying destructive power erupted out, completely wiping out the magical and natural laws that were descending from beyond!

Although the vortex seemed unwilling, it began to fade away. The black-armored warrior's eyes began to turn dark, and with a sigh, it collapsed into pieces!

Yet again, a shocking reversal had taken place. The Celestial had perfectly countered every one of Gongsun Wan'er's moves. And now, the world projection sealing mark began to shrink down over her once again!

"You will become my Dharma slave, who I will use to pilot this battleship.... I will draw upon the magical and natural laws of the outside world to open the gate, and leave this place! There is a new Hell-Emperor now, and he isn't strong enough to get in my way. As for the gravekeeper, he grows weaker every day. Who can possibly stop me!?!?" The excitement was clear in the Celestial's voice. As the sealing mark shrank down and down, it seemed obvious... that victory was at hand!

But then....

A profound, mysterious voice suddenly rang out in Gongsun Wan'er's mind!

"You have a choice to make now, left arm of mine. Become the Dharma slave of Daoist Heavenspan. Or... come back to me, and allow me... to take you home!"

The nine words spoken by the black-armored figure are nine "magical words" that come from ancient Daoism. Later they were appropriated by the Japanese, where they came to be associated heavily with ninjitsu. They also have special associated hand signs (incantation gestures). The Chinese version is not very well documented in English from what I could find, but you can search

for the Japanese version by googling kuji-kiri.

Chapter 951: Bai Xiaochuns Oath

“You....” The instant the voice echoed out into Gongsun Wan’er’s mind, she understood everything. Bitterness filling her heart, she replied to the voice in her mind. “So, you were gambling this entire time.... That’s not like us....”

“You’re right,” Ghostmother replied, “it's not like us. But... the gamble paid off!” Ghostmother couldn’t help but think back to the agreement she had made with the gravekeeper all those years ago, and how he was the one who had come up with this entire plan.... He was definitely a person worthy of deep respect.

“I wouldn’t expect anything less from the last remaining bit of will from that most ancient individual....” The truth was that from the moment she had arrived in this world, she had been gambling!

After losing her left arm, her cultivation base had dropped, making it difficult for her to control the bone galleon. Even worse... without the sealing power available in her left arm, she couldn’t activate the Devil-Conquering Mirror to draw upon her most powerful divine ability... her Three Ghost Flags!

Those three flags were one of the main reasons she had become Ghostmother to begin with. In the world beyond this world, she had paid a heavy price, and also called upon the help of a powerful expert, to capture three evil ghosts whose cultivation bases were analogous to the celestial level, and seal them into three conjoined flags.

When combined, those three flags constituted the most powerful magical item she possessed, especially the middle one with the laughing-crying ghost face. Before being sealed, that ghost had been only one step away from breaking out of the Celestial Realm. Although it never had reached the Archaean Realm, it could definitely be considered half-archaean!

All three of the evil ghosts’ cultivation bases had been reduced

because of being sealed, but when the three flags were used together, they could push Ghostmother's battle prowess to a level that was shocking even in the world beyond the heavens.

Unfortunately, the three evil ghosts were unstable and difficult to control, which was why she had asked an archaean to forge the Devil-Conquering Mirror. Normally speaking, that mirror was enough to keep the evil ghosts in check, although there was still some level of difficulty in controlling them fully. And that was why she had used a secret magic to brand herself with an eternal magical symbol, placed onto her left hand, which allowed her to summon and control the three evil ghosts.

After her left arm was lost, Ghostmother experienced a significant drop in her overall power. She couldn't control the sealing mark in the Devil-Conquering Mirror, and therefore... when the Celestial returned her left arm to her, she could only gamble on the outcome!

She had gambled that the ever-suspicious Celestial wouldn't trust anyone fully, and would eventually make a move on Gongsun Wan'er. And of course, this was all based on information given to her by the gravekeeper, based on his personal analysis!

She had also gambled that her left arm, personified in Gongsun Wan'er, would have made other preparations. Therefore, the moment when the Celestial began to fight Gongsun Wan'er was the moment for Ghostmother to make her comeback!

In truth... it wasn't quite correct to say that she had been unable to fight back against the Celestial's world projection. Instead, she had allowed Gongsun Wan'er to begin to consume her in order to create all of the opportunities needed!

"You win..." Gongsun Wan'er replied in her mind. "Take me home...." Of course, that conversation happened in the brief time it takes to snap a finger.

There were no other options available to Gongsun Wan'er. She

didn't want to become a slave of the Celestial, and therefore, she simply closed her eyes and lapsed into silence.

The instant she closed her eyes, the black smoke around her took the shape of Ghostmother.

"You...!" the Celestial gasped, his face falling. He had gone all out to bolster the strength of his sealing mark, but in the moment before it completely locked down Gongsun Wan'er, Ghostmother appeared next to her.

"Ghost Trio, your time has come!!"

Intense rumbling sounds filled the air, the source being one of the three flags on the bone galleon, which exploded violently.

A roar of rage erupted out as a huge ghost face materialized, radiating shocking energy that surpassed the Demigod Realm and came close to the Celestial Realm!!

The ghost had three horns, dark violet skin, and was fiendish in appearance!

The instant the ghost face appeared, it shot toward the world projection sealing mark, causing the Celestial's face to flicker. The Celestial prepared to intervene, but before he could....

A rumbling sound even more intense than the previous one erupted into the air. The second flag exploded, and a second ghost face flew out!

This ghost was green, with numerous eyes! Furthermore, when it opened its mouth, even more eyes were visible inside!

Its energy was just as close to the Celestial Realm as the other ghost's, and in fact, was a bit more powerful! It was like a fiendish monster that, upon being unleashed, charged directly toward the world projection sealing mark!

The Celestial was clearly very anxious by this point, and was just preparing to take defensive action to block the two ghost faces

when... a third appeared!

The third flag exploded, unleashing even more brutally powerful fluctuations, along with vicious, cackling laughter.

“You finally freed me, Ghostmother....” said a voice that shook all heaven and earth. It was like a combination of countless evil ghosts all roaring at the same time, causing everything in the area to tremble violently.

This ghost face was half black and half white. It was clearly laughing, but at the same time, seemed to be crying. Or perhaps it would be better to say that it was clearly crying, but seemed to be laughing at the same time.

It was bizarre to the extreme, to the point where anyone who looked at it would be so shaken they began to tremble physically!

The Nascent Soul cultivators on board felt their life force being sucked out of their eyes, ears, noses, and mouths, and no matter what they did to try to defend themselves, it was useless.

Bai Xiaochun gasped, and began to tremble in fear. He actually recognized this most powerful of the ghost faces. It was the very same face that had smiled ferociously at him from within the flag back when he first saw the bone galleon!

This ghost face was so shockingly powerful that... it seemed to be perfectly on par with the Celestial!!

Bai Xiaochun wasn't the only one to be visibly taken aback. The Celestial was clearly struck with profound anxiety at the sight of these three ghost faces shooting toward his world projection sealing mark.

They were moving so quickly that it was obvious there was no way to stop them from reaching their target!

When they struck, the resulting boom was so loud it threatened to shatter the world. A huge depression appeared in the sealing mark, which clearly could not stand up to a celestial-level strike.

Cracks spread out across its surface, and then it shattered....

Even more shocking to Bai Xiaochun was that, as the sealing mark shattered, the laughing-crying ghost face's eyes lit up with a gleam of greed, and he began to consume the destroyed fragments.

With every piece that he swallowed, the excitement in his eyes grew more intense.

“Delicious.... Hahaha! It's been a long time since I've enjoyed flavor like this.... This world seems full of tasty things. I want to eat them all!!”

“How dare you, you vile thing!!” the Celestial howled. He was just about to step forward to attack when the laughing-crying ghost face turned and looked at him, eyes shining with bizarre light.

“Ah, a quasi-celestial.... I think I'll eat you too!” Laughing loudly, the ghost face abandoned the shattered remnants of the sealing mark and shot toward the Celestial. The other two ghost faces looked on, clearly terrified of the laughing-crying ghost face. However, after a moment, they joined in to attack the Celestial.

Everything was happening too quickly. Everyone on the bone galleon was having their life force sucked away from them, and as a result, were completely ashen-faced and in despair. The devas had it a bit better off, and in fact, Bai Xiaochun wasn't losing any life force at all.

However, his eyes were completely bloodshot as he stood there glaring at Ghostmother! He looked like he was about to explode!

Now that the world projection sealing mark had been destroyed, and the three ghost faces were harrying the Celestial, Ghostmother once again turned into a huge mouth that turned to consume Gongsun Wan'er. And of course, Gongsun Wan'er was still occupying Hou Xiaomei's body!

Hou Xiaomei shivered, and black smoke began to pour out of her

eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. It rapidly transformed into the image of a young girl, who looked around bitterly at the world around her, and then glanced back at Hou Xiaomei.

“Don’t hurt her....” she murmured. Then she closed her eyes, and her soul body was swallowed up by Ghostmother.

At that point, another soul body emerged, which belonged to none other than Hou Xiaomei. It too began to float toward Ghostmother....

Bai Xiaochun felt like his heart was being torn apart. Blue veins bulged out on his neck and face, and his eyes turned more bloodshot than ever. Then, he shouted out in a voice that even attracted the notice of the Celestial and the three ghost faces!!

“Ghostmother!! If you want to consume Gongsun Wan’er, that’s your business. But if you hurt Hou Xiaomei, then I, Bai Xiaochun, swear an oath that, whether I have to go to the highest heavens or the deepest hells to do it, I will kill you!!!”

Chapter 952: The Bone Galleon Sets Sail!

Bai Xiaochun's voice was hoarse, despondent, and yet filled with indescribable determination. As he spoke, it seemed as though his words resonated with the natural laws of heaven and earth, causing them to echo out in explosive fashion.

Ghostmother was currently absorbing Gongsun Wan'er, and as a result, her facial features were becoming clear. Her eyes, nose, and mouth all appeared, revealing the face of a lovely young woman!

She had fair skin and entrancing eyes, and overall, was incredibly beautiful!

Her previously severed left arm was growing back, and within moments, looked as ordinary as ever. At the same time, a devastatingly powerful aura sprang up from her.

“Are you threatening me?” she asked, looking at Bai Xiaochun with eyes as entrancing as the stars in the sky.

However, Bai Xiaochun was not entranced in the least. Seemingly hovering on the brink of insanity, he grated, “No. Not a threat. Just... a promise!”

Bai Xiaochun wasn't really thinking about what he was saying. If he were, then considering his personality, he wouldn't ever dare to say something like this to Ghostmother. But... that was just one of the contradictions that was part of Bai Xiaochun.

Although he feared death, whenever he saw someone he considered to be a friend or family member in trouble, he would not flee or act with cowardice!

In this moment, Bai Xiaochun didn't even know what fear was. All he knew was that Hou Xiaomei's life was on the line. In fact, he had already decided that, if he had to, he would call upon his apprentice, and even summon the gravekeeper if necessary, to stop Ghostmother!

From the madness in his eyes, it was possible to tell what he was thinking, and how determined he was.... Ghostmother could see it, and it shook her deeply. She could already sense the will of the world around her thrumming in response to the oath that he had just sworn!

For some reason, her heart began to pound. In her eyes, Bai Xiaochun was nothing but a mere deva. Were it not for the gravekeeper's command medallion that he had, she could crush him to death without even thinking about it. However, her intuition was telling her... that if she consumed Hou Xiaomei's soul, then one day in the future, she would end up facing an incredibly powerful foe because of it!

In response to that sudden feeling, Ghostmother's eyes flickered, and the huge mouth she had summoned to consume Hou Xiaomei's soul suddenly vanished. Waving her hand, she sent Hou Xiaomei's soul flying back into her body.

"Not a bad physical body. Plus she's strangely connected to this kid. I guess she would make a good choice for an apprentice." Having made her decision, she waved her arm, sending the unconscious Hou Xiaomei flying into her sleeve. With that, she turned back to the bone galleon.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes nearly welled up with tears of blood, and he was panting heavily.

Meanwhile, the Celestial continued to fall back in the face of the three ghost faces.

"Ghostmother!" he cried urgently. "We had an agreement! We--"

"We had an agreement?" she interrupted. She laughed. "What a joke!"

The scorn in her eyes couldn't have been clearer. Before, she had been forced to put on an act, but now, there was no one in this world other than the mysterious gravekeeper who she would

possibly fear.

She didn't even care about this quasi-celestial. Were he not so tied together with the power of the world around him, she might have killed him and turned him into a fourth flag!

“Unfortunately, he is bolstered by the power of the world, which would make him very hard to kill right now.... If only I could break out of the Celestial Realm and into the Archaean Realm.... Then I could ignore the natural laws and kill him. Right now, though, only someone from these lands could kill him without worrying about the blessing of the world.”

To be openly scorned by Ghostmother in front of so many other cultivators caused an unsightly expression to appear on the Celestial's face.

He was really having a hard time accepting this. Moments ago, victory had been in sight, but now the tables had been completely turned. Not only did his plan to make Gongsun Wan'er a slave fail, but now, Ghostmother was back in a position of power.

“Gravekeeper, you bastard, you've blocked me at every turn,” he growled to himself. “You did it in the Wildlands, and now here I can see the traces of your hand.... I refuse to accept this! I vow to escape from this world!! I rule this world!!” He truly felt like going mad. After all, if it weren't for his serious injuries, things would have turned out very different this day.

Before he could say anything else, Ghostmother touched down onto the bone galleon. Although she looked spectacularly beautiful, she also was profoundly scornful.

“Now the time has come to leave his world... and go home. Vile Celestial Bone Galleon: set sail!” With that, she waved her hand, causing rumbling sounds to fill the air, and the entire ship to vibrate. At the same time, the sea of bones surrounding it was transformed into ashes....

Crevices snaked out across the surface of the Deadmire, from within which bone spikes emerged.... In fact, from one of the largest crevices emerged... a sinister bone tail!!

It was almost as if some enormous creature were about to climb out from under the ground! Many of the cultivators that remained felt a massive force slamming into them, causing blood to spray out of their mouths as they were hurled off of the ship!

Bai Xiaochun was included among them....

At the same time, the bone galleon began to rise up into the sky. Countless gasps could be heard as... the main body of the ship, which up to this point had never been seen... became visible!

“This... this....”

“Heavens! The bone galleon is actually only part of something larger! The bigger part... was hidden beneath the surface of the ground!!” Bai Xiaochun was just as shocked as everyone else to see an even larger bone ship rising up from the ground!

More precisely, what had been visible before was only part of the larger bone galleon. Now that the bone sea was destroyed, and the Deadmire was falling apart, the full, ancient ship was being revealed!

Shockingly, it was... an enormous lizard made from bones!!

It was so large that it was almost impossible to look at from one end to the other! Furthermore, the bone galleon which had been visible before... was only part of the lizard's head!

This shocking development went beyond what anyone could have imagined!

Numerous cultivators, including Bai Lin, Zhao Tianjiao, and others familiar to Bai Xiaochun, were so astonished they coughed up blood.

Rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth as Ghostmother threw

her arms wide, causing the sky to distort and a vortex to appear.

Through that vortex, Bai Xiaochun could see what appeared to be another world.... Although it wasn't clear enough to make out any details, he could sense it beyond the shadow of a doubt!

“Time to go home!!” Ghostmother cried. The Deadmire began to collapse as the huge bone lizard shot up toward the vortex!

From a distance, it almost looked like that lizard was punching a hole into the sky!

It was at that exact same moment that Bai Xiaochun realized that, not only was Hou Xiaomei being taken away, but there were other cultivators stuck on the bone galleon as well. In fact, there were dozens!

And one of them was... Big Fatty Zhang!

Big Fatty Zhang stood on the deck, trembling as he looked up at the vortex. Then he looked at Ghostmother with her upraised arms. At that point, a tremor passed through Big Fatty Zhang, and he recalled the dream he had experienced....

“Is this the new world...?”

Chapter 953: She Awakens!

As the bone lizard rose up into the sky, the three ghost faces were tugged unwillingly away from the Celestial and toward the vortex.

However, the laughing-crying ghost face seemed far more defiant than the other two.

“I like this world... I don’t want to leave! I want to stay....” However, no matter how hard it struggled, it couldn’t escape from the control of the bone galleon, and was dragged ever upward.

Soon, the bone lizard was only moments away from entering the vortex. Down below, a look of indescribable longing could be seen on the face of the Celestial.

In terms of attitude, his was the polar opposite of the laughing-crying ghost face. He had long yearned to be able to reach the peak of the world he lived in, and then step beyond it. However, after all this time, he was still stuck in the same place. It was almost as if he were in a huge prison!

He didn’t want to live in this world. He wanted to leave it. If he forced his way out... the world would be destroyed, and everyone in it killed. And yet, he still wanted to leave!

Big Fatty Zhang and the other cultivators stuck on the bone galleon were heading into extreme danger. But for the Celestial, that ship and that vortex represented the future.

The Celestial burst into motion, becoming a beam of bright light that shot toward the vortex!

However... not only did he feel pressure pushing at him from above, but the lands below also tugged him down. It was actually impossible for him to even get close to the vortex!

In fact, the will of the world which was part of him recognized what he was doing, and began to tremble on the verge of collapse. At that point, a howl of defiant rage escaped the Celestial’s lips.

“Gravekeeper, you bastard! One of these days... I will escape this place!!” His words shook the world like heavenly thunder, and even caused lightning bolts to appear in the air around the huge bone lizard.

A sea of lightning appeared, almost like a huge hand that then grabbed at the lizard.

The Celestial was using his last bit of power to try to prevent the bone galleon from leaving!

Tinged with the power of the Heavenspan River, the lightning hand was golden as it closed in on the bone lizard.

However, before the hand could actually touch the lizard, Ghostmother chuckled coldly and performed a double-handed incantation gesture. Instantly, black smoke erupted from the lizard and shot toward the golden lightning hand.

Rumbling sounds filled the air as the two made contact. Clearly, the lightning hand was no match for the smoke, as it began to tremble and fall to pieces. Before it could be completely destroyed, though, the laughing-crying ghost face suddenly used an unknown technique to change directions and shoot toward the hand.

This sudden turn of events caught Ghostmother by surprise, and a murderous aura sprang up from her. Even the Celestial was shocked. However, he reacted quickly, and sent the golden hand speeding toward the laughing-crying ghost face!

A huge boom rang out as the laughing-crying ghost face... was snatched up by the Celestial’s huge hand.

Then... as the hand descended back toward the Celestial, and then opened up, the laughing-crying ghost face was nowhere to be seen....

The Celestial stood there, eyes flickering with thought.

When Ghostmother saw what had occurred, her murderous aura grew even more intense, and yet, she didn’t say anything. Looking

back down at the world below one last time, she turned her attention away, and sent the bone lizard into the vortex....

However, it was in that moment that something happened that not even the Celestial could ever have predicted. Down in the destroyed bone sea, a figure shot up into the air at high speed!

It was none other than... Bai Xiaochun!

“Ghostmother, give Hou Xiaomei and my Eldest Brother back to me!!” He had long since decided to throw caution to the wind; he simply couldn’t stand idly by as Hou Xiaomei and Big Fatty Zhang were taken into that vortex.

He moved with incredible speed, shooting up toward the disappearing bone lizard. As for the cultivators who remained down below, they looked on with surprise and astonishment.

The Celestial’s eyes narrowed. From what he could tell, everything that was happening reeked of the gravekeeper’s meddling, and he couldn’t help but be suspicious about why the gravekeeper hadn’t made an appearance.

“The old ghost’s schemes run too deep.... I refuse to believe that he did all this simply to hurt me. There must be some other goal he’s working toward!”

Ghostmother looked down from the bone lizard at Bai Xiaochun, and could see the bloodshot madness in his eyes. However, it didn’t matter how fast he was going, there was no way for him to catch up to the bone lizard. Before he could even get close, it was in the vortex and fading away!

In the last moment before it was gone, Ghostmother’s lips moved as she transmitted a message to Bai Xiaochun.

“Don’t worry, I have an agreement with the gravekeeper. Because of that, I will keep your friends safe. The girl has unique qualities that conform to the techniques I cultivate. I will take her as an apprentice. As for the other cultivators onboard, I will keep

them safe.”

Bai Xiaochun hovered there in midair, looking powerlessly at the disappearing vortex.

“Xiaomei... Eldest Brother....” At the moment, he felt completely helpless and lonely.

He suddenly thought back to the dream Big Fatty Zhang had told him about.... Clearly, his Eldest Brother had anticipated this moment for a long time.

Bai Xiaochun could only hope... that Ghostmother was telling the truth....

As he grew older, as he advanced his cultivation base and increased his longevity, Bai Xiaochun was coming to realize... that growing up came with a price.

This wasn't his first time feeling it. He had experienced this same sensation often in the past. And it always left him feeling powerless. The only thing he wasn't sure about was whether to blame himself or the world around him.

He just wanted to practice cultivation and be happy. He just wanted to live his life and smile and laugh....

Pain and bitterness gripped his heart as he wondered if he would ever see Big Fatty Zhang and Hou Xiaomei again....

“Hopefully so....” he murmured to himself. He was so wrapped up in his thoughts that he didn't notice how, as the vortex vanished and the Deadmire collapsed, the restrictive spells in the area began to unravel.

There was now nothing in the Deadmire to cause problems for cultivators. Perhaps, after many years passed, the area would return to its normal state... and people would be able to pass through it freely!

The Celestial left to chase the laughing-crying ghost face, and

didn't take anyone with him, not even Du Lingfei. Du Lingfei looked up at Bai Xiaochun, mixed emotions visible on her face. She seemed to be in a bleak mood as well, but she managed to take a deep breath, fly up, and grasp Bai Xiaochun's hand.

"Xiaochun, don't be sad.... I'm sure that you'll see them again one day."

Bai Xiaochun looked over, and could tell that, as she clasped his hand, she was trying to pass all of the warmth and hope she could into him. After a long moment, he nodded.

There were less than 200 cultivators left on the shattered bones below. All of them were wounded in one way or another. Even Du Lingfei, despite having been in her father's bag of holding, had been affected by the battle with Ghostmother and Gongsun Wan'er.

No one was hurt too badly, but all of them would need time to recover. Soon, the entire group began making their way toward the exit of the Deadmire.

Not only did they need to get to a place where they could focus on recovering, but they also needed to determine where exactly they were. Whichever branch of the river was nearest, they would make their way to the riversource sect there, and then use teleportation portals to get home.

They traveled in silence, their hearts heavy. The twin Master Cloud Lightnings, Guru Spirit Immortal and Master Thousand-Ghost were devas, and as such, leaders within the group, but even they were wounded, and were still trembling in shock from everything that had happened. The trial by fire was not at all how anyone had expected it to be. Profound secrets had been laid bare, secrets which surpassed the imaginations of everyone present.

Eventually, they reached the end of the Deadmire, and found themselves looking at a world of snow and ice. When the twin Master Cloud Lightnings felt the frigid qi in the area, their jaws

dropped. They weren't the only ones. The other cultivators from the north all looked around, eyes sparkling with delight.

“The north! We're in the north!!”

“I can sense the frigid spiritual energy of the north!!”

This part of the Deadmire... was attached to the northern Heavenspan River region!

Bai Xiaochun was still dispirited and downcast. However, it was in that moment that his expression flickered, and he looked down at his bag of holding.

“Is something wrong?” Du Lingfei asked curiously.

“No. It's nothing....” he replied, avoiding the topic. However, waves of shock were battering his heart. Just now, he had sensed that, within the coffin that Patriarch Spirit Stream had given him, the sleeping baby girl... had murmured something to him!

“The aura of home....”

Chapter 954: The Hostile Northerners

Bai Xiaochun was quite certain that he wasn't hearing things. Whether it was the voice in his head, or the fluctuations coming from his bag of holding, he was certain that...

"She's awake!!" Shaken, he sent a stream of divine sense into his bag of holding to check on the coffin. However, all observations indicated that the baby girl was sleeping, her eyes closed, not a trace of life force on her whatsoever.

Because of how many people were around, he couldn't very well take out the coffin and examine it closely in front of them. Therefore, he buried his questions in his heart, looked over at Du Lingfei, and shook his head.

"No. It's nothing...."

Before Du Lingfei could respond, the twin Master Cloud Lightnings chuckled coldly. "Of course it's nothing. What, you find out you're in the north, and you're scared all of a sudden?!"

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings had been suppressing their anger for too long now. Bai Xiaochun had killed their beloved apprentice, creating a grudge that could only be resolved by death. However, the details of Bai Xiaochun's identity had caused intense fear to spring up in their hearts. Not only had they not dared to try to kill him, but being worried that he would try to get revenge on them, they had already considered giving him some gifts to smooth things over.

But after everything which had occurred later, and given that the twin Master Cloud Lightnings were devas, they were easily able to see... how the Celestial actually viewed the situation.

"The Celestial doesn't really view him as a son-in-law.... Although he's in some sort of relationship with Du Lingfei, unless the Celestial approves of it, he's just like any other deva. In any of

the other rivers, I might need to fear him, but this is the north! Even if he's a dragon normally, he's a worm to me here!"

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings chuckled coldly, and did nothing to mask the cold gleams in their eyes. The truth was, just as they had been musing, in the north, which was controlled by their sect, they would have the upper hand when dealing with Bai Xiaochun.

In response to the twin Master Cloud Lightnings' words, the other surrounding cultivators' expressions flickered. The cultivators from the south and the west didn't say anything; they didn't want to get involved in any posturing right now. But things were different with the northerners.

Virtually all of the northern cultivators' eyes glittered. Now that they were surrounded by frigid qi, their cultivation bases could rotate more rapidly than before. Looking over at Bai Xiaochun and the other easterners, they adopted the same, hostile attitude as the twin Master Cloud Lightnings.

The eastern cultivators wanted to make a stand of sorts, but the dangers they had faced recently, and the fact that they were now in the north, sapped them of any ability to do so.

As for Bai Xiaochun, under normal circumstances, he would not have simply accepted the twin Master Cloud Lightnings' ridicule, and the hostility of the northern cultivators. But right now, he was in no mood for such things. His heart still hurt because of Hou Xiaomei and Big Fatty Zhang. Furthermore, he was still feeling shaken that the baby girl had spoken to him.

The only thing he wanted to do was go to the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect's teleportation portal and leave this place. Furthermore, he had no desire to go back to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. He wanted to go back to the River-Defying Sect, and take some time to calm down and recover.

Therefore, it was in rare fashion that he didn't even respond. The

twin Master Cloud Lightnings said more snide things, and the northern cultivators continued to glare at him in hostile fashion, but he just walked onward.

He felt like returning to the east on his own, and the truth was that he had his ways to do that if he wanted to. But he couldn't leave the other eastern cultivators behind on their own. If he did, they could very well end up suffering because of it.

When the twin Master Cloud Lightnings saw Bai Xiaochun's reaction, they laughed coldly, but ceased any sarcastic jibes. After all, the visiting cultivators were just passing through, and would reach the teleportation portal soon.

"He's just lucky!" The truth was that the twin Master Cloud Lightnings had hoped that Bai Xiaochun would start arguing with them, and provide an excuse to fight. Although they probably couldn't kill him, they could at least injure him in a way that would take dozens of years to recover!

Du Lingfei never got to reply to Bai Xiaochun. However, the look in her eye when she saw the northerners' hostility was noticed by the twin Master Cloud Lightnings, and was another main reason why he didn't take any action.

And thus, the cultivators left the Deadmire and headed into the northern Heavenspan River region. The northerners were all very excited, whereas the cultivators from the other three river branches were much more reserved.

The lands around them were frozen, the sky was dark, and an icy cold breeze blew constantly, providing the only sound to be heard...

There were ice mountains everywhere, jagged and sharp, and profoundly cold. Occasional flurries of snowflakes would rise up, but considering the cultivation bases of the travelers, they would melt as soon as they touched them.

In surroundings like these, mortals would quickly freeze to death. But even the weakest of these cultivators were in the Nascent Soul stage, and thus, they were unharmed.

Before long, they caught sight of a mighty, golden river which flowed off into the distance. It was none other than the northern Heavenspan River!

In the north, where it was so cold that virtually nothing could live, the Heavenspan River water flowed eternally, and was not frozen....

“So this is the north....” Bai Xiaochun murmured, looking around and thinking about the Spirit Stream Sect, and the Frigid School....

There was little talk as the cultivators turned into bright beams of light and shot through the freezing lands toward the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect.

Before long, that mighty and majestic sect was on the horizon. Eventually, Bai Xiaochun looked up and saw... an enormous and shocking waterfall at the end of the Heavenspan River!

Just like the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, the waterfall connected the sea above with the river below, fueling the flow of the river.

At the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, the area surrounding the waterfall was filled with lush vegetation. But the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect was different. The area surrounding the waterfall was a vast expanse of frozen white.

Furthermore, flanking the waterfall on either side were two enormous statues of ice!

They were majestic to the point of defying description, and radiated a shocking energy and profound pressure.

The statue on the left depicted a scholarly and refined middle-aged man. He was gazing up into the heavens, and even stretching out his right hand out toward the sky!

His hand was empty of any physical object. However... it propped up a majestic white cloud, so large that it appeared to be a land mass of some sort.

In fact, countless buildings existed on the cloud, and beams of light could be seen flying to and fro between them. Those beams of light were obviously cultivators!

Bai Xiaochun gasped at the sight of it. Based on what he remembered learning of the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect, he realized that the cloud in the hand of that statue must be... the sect's Cloud Order!

"In that case, the Lightning Order must be on the right." He shifted his gaze to the statue on the right, which also depicted a middle-aged man. However, this man was by no means scholarly and refined. He looked like a warrior, with blazing, threatening eyes. Furthermore, lightning danced to and fro all over him.

There was a cloud in his upraised left hand as well, but this cloud was black. It looked like a storm cloud, and much like the white cloud on the other side of the river, was covered with buildings and filled with cultivators.

In addition to the difference in color, this cloud appeared to be filled with silver lightning bolts, as well as the muffled rumble of thunder.

It was none other than the Lightning Order!

"The Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect ranks their disciples by cultivation base. First heaven disciples are the lowest ranked, with ninth heaven disciples being the highest.... Furthermore, their sect is split into two orders, those being the Cloud Order and the Lightning Order...." At this point, his gaze drifted upward, beyond the clouds being held up by the statues... to two coffins, one large and one small!

The large coffin was pitch black, and emanated an air of extreme

ancientness, as though it had existed for countless years within the stream of time. Within that coffin, Bai Xiaochun could just barely make out deva fluctuations....

“That must be the equivalent of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect’s blue rainbow. That’s where their devas reside.... That means the smaller coffin must be the home of the demigod.” Having reached this point in his train of thought, he focused his gaze on the ultimate pinnacle of the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect....

There, was a crystal coffin!

It was only thirty percent the size of the pitch-black coffin, but it occupied the highest location in the sect, and emanated a shocking aura.

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings looked around at the shocked expressions on the faces of the surrounding cultivators, smiled, and said, “Welcome to the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect.”

The northern cultivators were all visibly excited to be home after such a deadly ordeal. In almost the same moment that the twin Master Cloud Lightnings spoke, piercing whistling sounds erupted from within the sect, and numerous beams of light shot down from the two clouds, as well as from the black coffin.

There were also deva fluctuations! One, two, three, four!!

Four sets of deva fluctuations pushed away the will of the heavens as four enormous faces appeared up above, to stare down at the newly arrived crowd!

The gazes of one of those faces suddenly shifted to focus on Bai Xiaochun, and then spoke in a voice that echoed like the roar of heavenly thunder!

“You... killed a disciple from the north, didn’t you... Bai Xiaochun!?!?”

This deva clearly had ill intentions, and was domineering to the extreme.

Bai Xiaochun's eyelid twitched....

Chapter 955: Menacing And Overbearing

Of these four northern devas, three were men and one was a woman. The woman was not middle-aged, but neither was she young. However, she was very beautiful, albeit grimly frightening. Of the three men, two were older, and one was middle-aged. The latter was very handsome, with sword-like eyebrows and eyes that glittered like stars. Bai Xiaochun had seen quite a few handsome male cultivators in his time, but had to admit that none of them could compare to this man in terms of good looks.

In fact, it left him feeling a little prickly. This middle-aged cultivator was just too handsome. Plus, he had a very high cultivation base. Considering how his eyes glittered, he was clearly the type who female cultivators would find incredibly attractive.

By this point, the cultivators from the west and south, including Master Thousand-Ghost and Guru Spirit Immortal, had all backed away from the eastern cultivators.

Zhao Tianjiao and Bai Lin both had nervous expressions on their face. As for Song Que, he wasn't quite sure how to feel. Although he was nervous, he was also itching to see what Bai Xiaochun would do.

After all, it seemed like an irresolvable situation. The northern devas probably wouldn't dare to actually kill Bai Xiaochun, but it seemed unlikely that they would hold back from unleashing their fury on him.

Song Que was right in his assessment. The twin Master Cloud Lightnings had sent messages on their way back, which led to the northern devas immediately coming to cause problems for Bai Xiaochun upon his arrival.

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings chuckled coldly, their eyes flickering with icy light. "Hmph! Maybe we can't handle him alone, but with everyone together, it should be easy!"

Bai Xiaochun suddenly felt the pressure building up. Although he was in a despondent mood, this sudden development with the devas caused his heart to begin to pound. Without the twin Master Cloud Lightnings, the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect had four devas. However, if the twin Master Cloud Lightnings were counted....

Then Bai Xiaochun wasn't sure if that meant they had six devas or five.... Either way, he would be completely dominated. And that wasn't even mentioning the fact that there was a demigod in that crystal coffin up above.

To have four enormous deva faces staring down at him caused him to groan inwardly. In fact, if the twin Master Cloud Lightnings weren't present, he would definitely look around in confusion and ask who Bai Xiaochun was....

But now, he had no choice but to take a deep breath and stare back with bloodshot eyes.

"I'm a mighty and majestic deva!" he thought. "Even if my bones get broken and my blood gets spilled, I can't let myself look scared!" Heart thrumming with madness, he stepped forward, looked up at the faces and... slipped his arm around Du Lingfei's waist.

Du Lingfei had already been trying to think of a way to resolve the situation, but before she could even do anything, Bai Xiaochun stepped forward and put his arm around her.

Shocked, she looked over. To any observer, Bai Xiaochun would look impressive to the extreme, the type of person who looked down condescendingly on all creation.... Then, in front of all of the cultivators from the north, west, and south, and as the eastern cultivators looked on nervously to see how things would play out, Bai Xiaochun leaned over and kissed Du Lingfei loudly on the cheek....

Song Que's eyes went blank with shock, and the twin Master

Cloud Lightnings frowned. The northern devas looked on in shock... especially the handsome cultivator, whose eyes began to burn with anger.

“Wifey,” Bai Xiaochun said loudly, “since our dad, the exalted Celestial, is gone, that leaves it up to us to patrol the north. Oh, I seem to remember that you have an Elder Brother here, right? Could you put in a good word for me with him? Actually, since we’re already here in the north, we should probably go offer some formal greetings!”

Song Que gasped out loud. Zhao Tianjiao and Bai Lin stared with eyes as wide as saucers. As for Master Thousand-Ghost and Guru Spirit Immortal, they looked on with expressions of complete disbelief.

Although the twin Master Cloud Lightnings had been aware of the general situation, they could never have guessed that Bai Xiaochun would so shamelessly bank on his tenuous connection to the demigod patriarch.

The other northern devas were clearly hesitating. The truth was that even they were scared of Du Lingfei. At the same time, they were profoundly struck by how shameless Bai Xiaochun was!

“A mighty and majestic deva who seeks help from a woman! What kind of a clown is this guy?!”

“This Bai Xiaochun is exactly like the rumors say he is! He’s treacherous, crafty, and has no sense of shame!!”

Bai Xiaochun couldn't care less what the crowd was thinking, and even gave a proud harrumph. As far as he was concerned, only an idiot would start a fight in a situation like this.

Du Lingfei was feeling very out of sorts. Face scarlet, she glared over at Bai Xiaochun, opened her mouth, and was about to say something when an enraged shout interrupted her from above.

“Get your filthy hands off of her, Bai Xiaochun!!” It was none

other than the handsome, middle-aged deva, who became a bright beam of light that shot down toward Bai Xiaochun.

He had a mid Deva Realm cultivation base, and drew fully upon it, becoming a destructive meteor that bore down on Bai Xiaochun in the blink of an eye.

Bai Xiaochun was a bit surprised by this handsome cultivator's outburst, but there was no time to ponder the situation. Without any hesitation, he clenched his left hand into a fist and punched out into the air toward the man.

A rumbling boom could be heard, and Bai Xiaochun fell back a few paces, as did the handsome cultivator. At the same time, a murderous aura sprang up from Du Lingfei, and she shouted, "What do you think you're doing, Feng Chen!?"

Pointing angrily at Bai Xiaochun, Feng Chen said, "Lingfei, I can't believe this cretin would dare to sully you in my presence! I'm going to kill him!"

Bai Xiaochun was more than a little surprised at how this handsome Feng Chen addressed Du Lingfei. Blinking a few times, he looked at Du Lingfei and said, "You two know each other?"

Before Du Lingfei could reply, Feng Chen blurred into motion, attacking Bai Xiaochun yet again. At the same time, the other devas began to move in Bai Xiaochun's direction.

Bai Xiaochun gasped at the sensation of so much killing intent directed at him. There were four devas coming at him from all directions, making escape impossible. No matter which way he dodged, he would be facing a dangerous attack. At this point, cracking sounds filled the air as he roared and drew upon the Living Mountain Incantation!

Without any hesitation, he used the Mountain Shaking Bash, the Undying Hex, and a quintuple-power Undying Emperor's Fist!

The frigid coldness in the area suddenly grew more intense. The

four northern devas were clearly surprised by this shocking fist strike, and yet none of them backed up. Instead, they continued on with full force to meet it.

A huge boom rang out, and Bai Xiaochun staggered backward. At the same time, the twin Master Cloud Lightnings leaped into the fray. Now there were six devas working together. As they closed in, they sealed off the spiritual power in the area, making it more difficult to utilize divine abilities.

At this point, Bai Xiaochun let out a shout as he got ready to crush one of his drops of Undying Blood. After all, he had no other options at his disposal; these people were being complete bullies, leaving him with only his Godkiller technique, which he couldn't control very well!

“Cultivators from the other three river branches,” he said, “back up immediately!” It was a critical moment in which Bai Xiaochun was just about to use the Godkiller. Only a few breaths’ worth of time had passed since the northern devas made their move, and already, it was a dangerous situation.

At this point, Du Lingfei looked up at the crystal coffin and spoke in a loud voice, “Elder Brother Zhou, is this how you treat your Junior Sister when she brings people for a visit?! According to the rules my father set for the trial by fire, deaths would be unavoidable. Don’t tell me the north plans to use governmental authority to avenge private grudges?!”

The instant Du Lingfei finished speaking, laughter rang out from the crystal coffin. Then, the sky flashed with bright colors as a young man appeared out of thin air. He waved his hand, and although it didn’t seem like he exerted any power to do so, massive force exploded in the air between Bai Xiaochun and the other devas!

The six northerners’ divine abilities were instantly suppressed, and a gentle force shoved them backward. Things didn’t go as

smoothly for Bai Xiaochun, though. His divine abilities were forcefully crushed, and a powerful force slammed into him.

He grunted, coughing up a mouthful of blood as he staggered backward several steps. Gasping for breath, he looked up with bloodshot eyes at the young man hovering up above, radiating demigod fluctuations.

A very grim expression overtook Bai Xiaochun's face. Were it not for his unusually strong fleshly body, the blow from just now would have seriously injured him.

The young man glanced at Bai Xiaochun, then shifted his gaze to Du Lingfei, toward whom he smiled and said, "Little Junior Sister, do you really need to talk to your Fourth Elder Brother like that? Well, I guess I shouldn't get into any bickering. Men, activate the teleportation portal and send these cultivators back home to the other three river branches!"

Immediately, elders from the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect activated the teleportation portal, causing rumbling sounds to fill the sect. Master Thousand-Ghost and Guru Spirit Immortal offered respectful greetings to the demigod patriarch, and then led their subordinates to the teleportation portal. Within moments, they vanished.

Bai Xiaochun suppressed his rage, and led his own people toward the teleportation portal, surrounded by the sarcastic gazes and cold comments of the northern cultivators, as well as the naked killing intent of the devas.

However... it was in that moment that intense fluctuations which surpassed the demigod's suddenly descended onto the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect. The demigod's face fell, and even Du Lingfei looked surprised. Bai Xiaochun and the easterners looked up to see an enormous magical symbol descending from the sky. At a certain point, the symbol shattered, and a solemn voice echoed out in all directions!

“Bai Xiaochun is hereby appointed as a special guard to the emissary. He will assist Heavenspan Emissary Du Lingfei... in an inspection tour of the north!”

Chapter 956: Three-Point Covenant

It was a Dharmic decree from the Celestial himself!

Bai Xiaochun was visibly stunned, as were the northerners and easterners. Thoughtful expressions could be seen on the faces of Du Lingfei and the demigod.

Silence prevailed for a long moment before Bai Xiaochun finally regained his senses. At that point, sweat began to drip down his forehead. After all, he knew that everyone in the north disliked him.

“Uh... I'm probably not a good fit. Let's just go back to the east.” Feeling like he might start crying at any moment, he made a beeline for the teleportation portal.

However, in the moment he started moving, the demigod snorted coldly and waved his hands, causing powerful invisible bonds to wrap around Bai Xiaochun and prevent him from taking another step.

Bai Xiaochun could then do nothing but watch anxiously as all of the easterners hurried over to the teleportation portal, and then disappeared.

As of this point, Bai Xiaochun was now the only person left from one of the other sects, and he was surrounded by countless glaring northerners.

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings and the other devas were all cracking sarcastic jokes amongst themselves. After all, it would have been one thing if Bai Xiaochun had been promoted to the position of emissary. But he was now nothing more than a guard. Therefore, there were plenty of ways the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect could cause problems for him.

“Who would have thought that you would end up staying here, Bai Xiaochun? Well, I hope you enjoy your stay in the Nine

Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect.”

“It doesn’t matter how you threw your weight around back in the east. Here in the north... you’ll have no choice but to bow your head!”

The devas had already decided that, even though they couldn’t kill Bai Xiaochun, considering they were on home ground, they would definitely come up with plenty of ways to torment him.

All of the other lower-ranking cultivators were laughing and joking as well. After all, it was a rare thing to be able to make fun of a deva without fearing any consequences.

It all made sense. Bai Xiaochun had killed Master Lightning Origin, sowing a deep personal grudge between himself and the twin Master Cloud Lightnings, a grudge which extended to include all of the north.

Bai Xiaochun knew that there was no getting around it.

“I don’t want to stay here....” he wailed inwardly. As for Du Lingfei, a wry smile appeared on her face. Although she wasn’t sure exactly what her father was thinking, she did have business here in the north. Although she hadn’t anticipated having Bai Xiaochun around at the same time, there was nothing she could do to change it.

At this point, Feng Chen cast a cold glare at Bai Xiaochun, then walked forward and clasped hands in formal fashion to the demigod patriarch and Du Lingfei.

“Patriarch,” he said loudly, “I can accept the fact that this Bai Xiaochun has been appointed as a Heavenspan special guard, and will be stationed here in the north. But... considering how dangerous of a person he is, I suggest that we place some limitations on him, effective immediately!”

Bai Xiaochun wanted to offer a retort, but at the moment, the bonds placed on him by the demigod made it impossible to speak.

All he could do was curse inwardly.

The other devas, especially the twin Master Cloud Lightnings, agreed immediately, and began to voice their assent.

“It makes perfect sense! He might be a special guard, but he's also a foreign deva. We can't just let him do whatever he wants in our sect!”

“That's right. Patriarch, a mere glance at this Bai Xiaochun and one can see that he harbors ill intentions. The best thing would be to put some rules in place to keep him in check.”

Bai Xiaochun's anxiety began to mount, and Du Lingfei frowned.

Although the demigod patriarch hadn't openly agreed with Feng Chen, neither had he interrupted or refused. Therefore, Feng Chen smiled and clasped hands again.

“Patriarch, I suggest that as long as Bai Xiaochun is in the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect, he must abide by a three-point covenant!

“First, he will not be allowed to reside in the black coffin. He can stay in the Cloud Order, and will not be allowed to step off it a single pace. If he does... he'll be confined in the Lightning Order's Lightning Penitentiary!!”

Bai Xiaochun's heart was racing like mad, but all he could do was curse madly inside.

Feng Chen could guess how Bai Xiaochun was reacting, and even went so far as to look over and stare at him as he continued speaking.

“Second. He will not concoct pills while in the north. His Dao of medicine is bizarre, and so powerful that it can destroy even a riversource sect. Therefore, he must abide strictly by this second point. If he does not, he will not just be locked up in Lightning Penitentiary, but he will also be placed on death row and executed!”

The words were spoken with utmost solemnity, and caused a bit of humiliation to enter into the madness that raged in Bai Xiaochun's heart. After all, considering what had happened recently in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, he hadn't planned to do any pill concocting....

“And now the third point.... Hmph! The spiritual power of heaven and earth in the north belongs to us northern cultivators. How could we possibly just give it to a foreigner to use in cultivation? As long as Bai Xiaochun is in the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect, if he absorbs the slightest sliver of spiritual power, he will be locked up in Lightning Penitentiary!”

This three-point covenant was cruel and harsh, to say the least. All of the surrounding northern cultivators were convinced that it would have Bai Xiaochun completely locked down and bereft of hope. Even the twin Master Cloud Lightnings were shocked, and looked over at Feng Chen with complete approval.

Everything Feng Chen had said made sense, and seemed to be designed for the benefit of the north. Even the somewhat unreasonable third demand met with the approval of all of the surrounding cultivators.

After all, the spiritual energy in the north did belong to the northerners, so for a person from the east to take it was basically theft!

Bai Xiaochun felt like he was going insane, and was even trembling. However, he was still incapable of doing anything other than scream in his heart.

“Bullies! Complete and utter bullies!!”

Unfortunately, there was nothing he could do about the situation. And although he wasn't sure what exactly Du Lingfei was tasked with doing up here, he was fairly convinced that the Celestial was doing this in revenge for being slapped in the trial by fire.

Du Lingfei was currently looking coldly at Feng Chen, and doing nothing to conceal her anger and murderous aura.

“This is absurd,” she said coolly. “To enforce a three-point covenant like this on a Heavenspan special guard is a complete joke!”

Feng Chen hesitated, but didn’t respond. A moment passed, and the demigod chuckled.

“I think it's a wonderful idea,” he said. “Let’s do it.”

“Fourth Elder Brother,” Du Lingfei said, “you--”

“I'm not sure about the details of your relationship with Bai Xiaochun, Little Junior Sister. But you can rest at ease. As a special guard, he will not lose his life here so long as he doesn’t kill any northern cultivators. By the way, I need to remind you... that this is the north.” Chuckling again, he turned and vanished.

As he left, the bonds holding Bai Xiaochun in place faded away. He had seen how Du Lingfei leapt to his defense, and had also seen the cold attitude of the demigod patriarch, and it filled him with a sense of hopelessness.

“Ah, whatever,” he thought, sighing. “I’ll just do my best to behave. I hope boo’s inspection tour will end soon....”

Du Lingfei looked very anxious. Considering that her father was still injured, and given how badly the trial by fire had gone, it wasn’t just the demigod from the north who was feeling displeased with the Celestial....

And thus, with no way to change the outcome of events, Bai Xiaochun scowled on the verge of tears as he was ‘escorted’ to the white cloud above the statue of the refined and scholarly man. There, he was given the same residence that a first heaven disciple of the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect would get.

It was simple and crude, and in a remote location on the cloud. When Bai Xiaochun saw that, he sighed and tromped inside,

scowling the entire way.

Days passed, and soon Bai Xiaochun felt like he was going crazy. Wherever he went in the Cloud Order, people glared at him, even ones with very low cultivation bases. These were people he could kill without any effort, and yet they looked at him with the same scorn they would show a prisoner with a lower cultivation base than their own.

If he ever got close to the border of the Cloud Order, a stream of deva divine sense would lock onto him.

Obviously, if he stepped off of the cloud, he would be imprisoned.

He also couldn't practice cultivation. He could sense that he was constantly being monitored, and therefore, if he absorbed some of the spiritual power of heaven and earth, he would be violating the three-point covenant, and would be punished.

He had never been restricted in this way before, and it was reaching the point where he couldn't take it. For the first time in his life, he actually wished he could do some pill concocting. In this place, he wouldn't feel a scrap of guilt if anything strange happened. In fact, he would hope for it to....

“And yet... these bastards actually said I can't concoct pills!!”

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Trivia note: The “three-point covenant” is a common Chinese idiom that literally refers to some laws made by Emperor Gaozu of the Han Dynasty. Later, the idiom came to refer to general rules and agreements. Here, it's being literally used to mean a rule with three stipulations

Chapter 957: The Celestials Apprentice!

“How is a person supposed to live like this?!?!” To Bai Xiaochun, it felt like being trapped in a pit of despair. By this point, he was absolutely furious at the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect.

Unfortunately, there was nothing he could do about the situation. He couldn't beat six devas in a fight, and that wasn't even mentioning the demigod patriarch. Therefore, he simply had to endure.

“Grin and bear it!” he growled, tugging furiously at his hair. He had never been in such torment in his entire life, a situation in which all he could do was sit there and stare off into the sky.

He couldn't cultivate his Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation. And when it came to his Undying Blood... he didn't have enough life force to work with.

Other than sitting around bored, the only thing he could do was... sit around bored. Eventually, Du Lingfei came over to see him, and could tell from his disheveled state how dispirited he was, and that he was having a difficult time enduring.

“Xiaochun, just wait a little bit longer,” she said comfortingly. “And absolutely, positively do not do anything rash. I have an important mission to accomplish here for father. I'll try to get it done as quickly as possible, and then we can leave this place.”

Bai Xiaochun nodded dully, not even glancing at her as he continued to stare out into nothing.

Du Lingfei sighed, looked at him for a long moment, and then flew out of the sect.

Several more days passed, during which Bai Xiaochun simply sat around with nothing to do. Eventually, the northern devas realized that he was going to behave himself. However, they simply snorted coldly and proceeded to keep a very close eye on him.

There was nothing else Bai Xiaochun could do other than stare off into the distance. The truth was that he really had no idea of what else to possibly do. He tried reaching out to the little turtle, but didn't get even a single response.

As for the baby girl in the coffin, he didn't dare to bring her out, not with so many eyes monitoring him day and night.

Eventually, he had been sitting around bored for about half a month. One evening, he was sitting there as listless as usual, watching the deep red sunset, and the moon climbing up into the sky.

It was in that very moment that, without any warning, he heard a faint sigh.

Along with the sigh, he sensed certain fluctuations in his bag of holding....

“The aura of home....”

Bai Xiaochun very nearly gasped, but managed to keep himself under control. Despite the tsunamis of shock battering at his heart, he kept the expression of boredom on his face.

Without the slightest hesitation, he spoke into his mind, “Are you speaking to me, true spirit?!”

A long moment passed in which he got no response. Anxious, he was just contemplating taking the coffin out to look at, when the same faint voice was again transmitted into his mind.

“It's me.... Thank you for letting me once again feel... the aura of home....”

Bai Xiaochun was feeling very deeply shaken. To have the baby girl awaken in his moment of profound boredom had him feeling extremely excited. Therefore, he didn't hesitate to respond.

“How are you able to wake up without a River-Defying Pill?”

“My body isn't awake,” continued the voice, “only my mind....”

The north used to be my home, and the spiritual energy here is very beneficial to me.... If I can absorb enough of it, then it will be just as effective as a Hundred Breaths River-Defying Pill.... Unfortunately, even my mind can't stay awake very long right now....”

Worried that she would fall asleep soon, he quickly went on with the conversation. “The aura of home? Patriarch Spirit Stream once told me that the Spirit Stream Sect used to be a riversource sect from the north... the Frigid School. Is that what you're talking about?”

“The Frigid School....” The baby girl laughed softly, a bitter laughter that seemed filled with reminiscence. “You're right. The Frigid School.... Once upon a time, I was the Celestial's top apprentice. In his campaign against the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, I killed multiple heavenly kings. I eventually helped him drive the dynasty completely out of the Heavenspan River region.... Later, it was to help him defend the northern river region that I founded the riversource sect here... the Frigid School!”

“What?” he said, stunned. He had originally been interested in talking mostly because he was so bored. Never could he have imagined that a single question on his part would reveal astonishing secrets! It seemed almost unbelievable that this baby girl had once been the Celestial's top apprentice. After all, the current apprentices of the Celestial were the demigod patriarchs of the four riversource sects.

“How did....” he began, but then hesitated.

“You want to know how I ended up like this, and why the Frigid School was replaced by the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect...?”

“Well, the answer is simple.... The Celestial wanted it that way. Otherwise, there is no way that Zhou Daoyi... could have possibly been a match for me, even if he was a demigod!”

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and he began panting. This new

information from the baby girl was simply too astonishing. He simply couldn't imagine what the Frigid School's demigod expert could possibly have done to cause the Celestial to ignore the Master-apprentice bond and kill her. And why was she still around, a discarnate soul in the form of a baby girl?!

The baby girl could sense what Bai Xiaochun was thinking. After a moment of silence, she continued, "Child, I'm prepared to give you some spectacular good fortune, if you dare to take it!"

After a moment of hesitation, he asked, "Is it dangerous?"

This time, half an incense stick's worth of time passed before her voice thrummed in his mind again.

"I'm very curious why the Spirit Stream Sect would possibly give my coffin to you...."

Feeling a bit embarrassed, Bai Xiaochun decided to explain himself a bit. "Uh... I guess it must be because I like to play things safe. Hahaha...."

Ignoring him, the baby girl continued. "Back when I realized the Celestial was planning to kill me, I made plenty of preparations. Although my true self died, I managed to send out a soulclone.... The soulclone possessed the body of a true spirit, and erased all traces of my aura from it. Because of that, it was impossible for the Celestial to detect me.

"However, I only possessed the true spirit because my first plan failed. I originally wanted to possess a world treasure! The world treasure was not completed in time. If it had, then given the Celestial's cultivation base at the time, I might have been able to take him out!"

Unable to hold back, Bai Xiaochun asked, "World treasure?"

"The lands of the north in their entirety form the foundation of a world treasure. It was forged starting from the very depths of the ice here.... Do you understand what type of magical item I'm

talking about? A world treasure!” In this moment, the baby girl seemed completely domineering and powerful!

As for Bai Xiaochun, his eyes were nearly popping out of his skull.

“You took all of the lands of the north and used them to create a treasure? But... the north is so huge....” After all, the north was just like the east, almost like a continent in terms of size.

And yet, here this baby girl was saying that those lands were used as the foundation of a magical item, albeit one that was never completed....

Despite being a deva, this sounded like nothing more than a fairy tale to Bai Xiaochun.

“Heavens!” he thought. “I was just bored and wanted someone to talk to! Who would have thought that the conversation would be as monumental as this!?” He couldn’t help but look down at the ground below and think about the idea of it being part of a huge magical item.

At this point, the baby girl continued speaking. “I can sense that after all the years which have passed, the magical item... has fully taken shape. I need your help to finish the process. Once I become the spirit automaton of the treasure, I can repay you... by bonding the item to you!

“The only requirement I have... is that you kill the Celestial!

“The treasure will be incredibly powerful. It will take all of the lands of the north, remove them from the Heavenspan Realm, and transform them into... a frigid greatsword!

“The cultivators who live in the north, as well as any other living beings who have proliferated here, will not die. They will live in the world of the magical item. And once the sword is bonded to you... you will be its owner and master!

“At the same time... when I fuse with the world treasure, I can

give you access to the boundless spiritual energy of heaven and earth that has built up in it over the years. In a very short period of time, your cultivation base... may very well jump all the way into the Demigod Realm!

“That is the good fortune I wish to give you... And now, you need to tell me whether or not you dare to take it!” The baby girl spoke with decisiveness that could sever nails and chop iron!

Chapter 958: Ill Sell Medicine!

Bai Xiaochun almost couldn't control his breathing, and his eyes shone with intense brightness.

The mere thought of this good fortune caused him to visualize himself wielding a massive sword forged from the northern lands. He would sweep across all creation, and countless individuals with weaker cultivation bases than himself would gaze at him with awe and fervor.

That would truly be the peak of life! He could imagine how he would throw his head back and laugh uproariously, then flick his sleeve, stick his chin up and coolly say, With the flick of a sleeve, I, Bai Xiaochun, reduced all heaven and earth to ashes....

As he continued to imagine the scene which would play out when he became the ruler of the north, he saw the twin Master Cloud Lightnings, the furious Feng Chen, and even the demigod patriarch, all standing next to him, their hands tucked into opposite sleeves as they bowed and scraped....

Already, his excitement was building. However, after a moment, he hesitated. To have something amazing like this just fall out of the sky into his lap seemed a bit odd. At the same time, he figured that it wouldn't be good to seem too eager.

Therefore, he cleared his throat and hesitantly said, "Well, the thing is--"

However, before he could say anything else, the baby girl interrupted. "I can't stay awake for very long before needing to sleep again.... Tell me your answer the next time I wake up...." Then her voice faded away into nothing.

"Huh?" Surprised, he called out into his mind a few more times, but got no answer. Shaking his head, he came to the conclusion that the baby girl really had fallen unconscious again.

“She passed out way too quickly! I wasn’t even finished talking!” At this moment, his heart was itching with anticipation. The good fortune the baby girl had offered him was simply too enticing.

Sadly, there was nothing he could do about it now. The baby girl was too weak, so he would have to wait until the next time she woke up before continuing to discuss the matter. Sighing, he tried to figure out if the girl had intentionally fallen asleep right at that moment....

After analyzing the matter a bit, he couldn’t be sure, so he started thinking about what he would say the next time he could talk to her.

In the following days, he continued to look bored, but the truth was that with this new topic to ponder, he had plenty to think about.

Ten days passed by in a flash. Bai Xiaochun waited and waited, but the baby girl never woke up. It reached the point where he was so anxious for it to happen that it felt like ants were marching across his heart day and night.

At the same time, he had gotten used to life in the north. He followed all the rules, neither leaving the Cloud Order, concocting pills, or absorbing any of the energy of heaven and earth in the area.

Because of how well he behaved himself, the northerners, while they still didn’t like him, also couldn’t find anything to complain about.

He was still kept under close watch, though. Even the six devas would occasionally keep tabs on him. Countless disciples in the Cloud Order would talk about him, and even laugh coldly sometimes as they looked at his residence from afar.

“Bai Xiaochun has a reputation for being really aggressive, but now that he’s here in the north, he had no choice but to bow his

head! You know, it feels great to be able to bully a deva like this.”

“Deva? Ha! Here in the north, he can’t do anything! You guys should have seen it when he got put in his place. It was hilarious!”

“You know, I heard stories about Bai Xiaochun before. Supposedly, he causes disasters everywhere he goes. I’d always assumed he was some kind of superhuman monster, but I guess those were just exaggerations!”

Talk like this floated around the entire time. Although Bai Xiaochun wasn’t interested in listening to it, his keen deva divine sense made it almost impossible not to.

“This is outrageous! I can’t believe they’re being so sarcastic even though I’m behaving myself!” The more he heard, the angrier he got. Furthermore, considering that the baby girl wouldn’t wake up, it eventually got the point where time seemed to slow to an agonizing crawl.

“Enough is enough! I don’t care if I have no freedom, I have to work on my cultivation!” Bai Xiaochun had never thought of himself as a person who was truly into cultivation. But now that he was in the north, he had really begun to miss it.

After all, whenever he was in seclusion practicing cultivation, it was almost like being asleep. Time would fly by incredibly quickly.

“My Undying Blood needs life force, but I don’t have access to any cultivation resources, and I can’t bring that golden skeleton I found out into the open.... My Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation requires the energy of heaven and earth, but the northerners won’t let me absorb any....” It was a really frustrating situation, like an endless useless cycle. No matter what ideas he came up with, nothing seemed viable. There had to be a way to circumvent the three-point covenant and figure out a way to work on his cultivation!

A few days later, he looked up, hair disheveled and eyes

bloodshot, yet shining with bright light. Smacking his thigh, he laughed loudly.

“I, Bai Xiaochun, am a complete genius!! Hahaha! Won’t let me leave the Cloud Order? Fine, I won’t! Won’t let me absorb the energy of heaven and earth! Fine, I won’t! Won’t let me concoct pills? Fine, I won’t! I can always go sell medicinal pills!”

He was already starting to get excited at the prospect of selling some medicinal pills to earn spirit stones.

Then, he could use those spirit stones to work on his Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation. As far as how quickly he could progress, it would all come down to how many spirit stones he could get.

“Ordinary medicinal pills won’t be easy to sell. However, I have two types of pills that will definitely work!” With that, he excitedly slapped his bag of holding to produce two medicinal pill bottles.

Looking down at them, his eyes began to burn with passion and pride.

“Everybody needs an Aphrodisiac Pill once in a while! And once you consume a Fantasy Pill, you’ll never want to go back!” Sighing, he mused that it was a good thing he had concocted so many medicinal pills in his spare time back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Without the stockpile he had built up, he would really be at a dead end here in the north.

He had already figured out the best way to go about selling pills. Obviously, he couldn’t just sell these two types, so therefore he would add in some other miscellaneous items as well, and sell everything together. After getting everything ready, a bit of hesitation lurked in his heart. But then the thought about how outrageous the northerners were being, scorning and ridiculing him constantly. And then there was the blood feud between the Frigid School and the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect. At that point, he gritted his teeth.

“You people are forcing me to do this!” he murmured, rushing out the door.

As soon as he was out in the open, the gazes of countless northerners locked onto him, gazes of ridicule and mockery. Just as many of them had said openly, it was their first time being able to openly bully a deva, and it was something many of them had come to enjoy.

Because they had the tacit approval of their demigod patriarch, none of the disciples were worried about any consequences. However, at this point, Bai Xiaochun didn't care. In fact, the more people who were paying attention to him, the better.

After swaggering around a bit to make sure plenty of people had noticed him, he selected a public square near where people in the Cloud Order gathered for trials by fire.

Within the square were nine gates that led into nine separate arcane pocket realms. It was very similar to the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect in that the disciples who went into the pocket realms would be ranked according to their performance. As a result, it was a big center of competition for the disciples.

After finding a suitable location, he sat down, spread a white cloth out in front of him, and started pulling things out of his bag of holding. In front of him on the white cloth, he arranged magical items, medicinal pills, and other random items. At the moment, he didn't put any Aphrodisiac Pills or Fantasy Pills up for sale.

After arranging everything properly, he waited for customers.

His actions had garnered quite a bit of attention, and before long, disciples were heading over to see what was happening. When they did, jaws dropped, and many of them began to openly laugh.

“He set up a vendor stall? A mighty deva is selling stuff on the street? Hahaha!”

“Looks like we really drove him crazy. He can't leave, can't

concoct pills, and can't practice cultivation. Now he has no option other than to sell random stuff on the street!"

The cultivators in the public square weren't the only ones to notice and start poking fun. Even the devas in the black coffin noticed, and sent down streams of divine sense to observe.

Chapter 959: Four-Point Covenant

However, the devas didn't have the time to literally watch over Bai Xiaochun every hour of every day. And considering the three-point covenant which was in place, it didn't matter how shockingly powerful Bai Xiaochun was. He wouldn't be able to do much.

Another half a month went by. Every day, Bai Xiaochun would set up his vendor stall, and although he didn't do much business, he worked as hard as he could to attract the northern disciples, providing loud descriptions of the various magical items and medicinal pills he was offering for sale.

On one particular day when he was sure that there was no deva divine sense watching him, he leaned forward to a burly fellow who was browsing through his medicinal pills.

"Hey man," he said quietly, "I have some special medicinal pills right over here. Want to have a look?"

This was the burly man's third visit, and Bai Xiaochun had been observing him carefully. It was only after confirming that he didn't seem suspicious that he finally decided to make him an offer.

"What medicinal pills?" the man asked, instantly on guard.

With a flourish, Bai Xiaochun produced a Fantasy Pill.

The unique aura which emanated off of the pill caused the burly man's eyes to widen. Eyes glittering, he grabbed it. Not even bothering to ask how much it cost, he tossed Bai Xiaochun a spirit stone, then walked off.

One spirit stone for one Fantasy Pill wasn't even enough to cover the production costs. Clearly, the burly man felt that Bai Xiaochun was lucky just to be able to sell things in the north. Actually, that attitude was prevalent among almost all of the northerners.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes narrowed as he looked down at the one spirit stone. However, he didn't mind. He simply sat there, occasionally hawking his wares to the passersby. As time went by, he would identify disciples he deemed trustworthy, and would offer them Aphrodisiac or Fantasy Pills.

"As hostile as these northerners are, I still treat them in very moral fashion. I only sell Aphrodisiac Pills to the female disciples, and not to the men. As for the Fantasy Pills, they only go to the male disciples, not the women."

He sighed at the realization that his greatest weakness was how good and honest he was.

Even as he shook his head, a particularly burly and fierce female cultivator appeared in front of him.

"Is there a male cultivator you've taken a liking to?" he asked. "All you need is one Aphrodisiac Pill, and he'll be yours forever...."

When the woman grabbed the Aphrodisiac Pill, her particularly meaty fingers nearly crushed it, scaring Bai Xiaochun half to death. Grabbing her hand to stop her from breaking it, he said, "You can't crush it here! Ai, maybe this pill isn't for you...."

The female cultivator immediately threw him a bag of spirit stones, turned, and hurried off.

Bai Xiaochun stared in shock before putting the spirit stones away. Soon, he began to sell Uncaring Pills, which were a byproduct of his experimentation with the uncaring fruits back in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

"Have you heard of my Aphrodisiac Pills? Don't worry, this is the antidote. If you take an Uncaring Pill, it will keep you safe from the effects of an Aphrodisiac Pill!"

"Listen... your Cloud Order has a lot of really tough female cultivators, and pretty much all of them have come to buy Aphrodisiac Pills from me. Just... be careful out there!"

He was very careful about who he sold the three different pills to, and would only pick from repeat customers that he had observed carefully. Because of that, the pills didn't cause a big commotion in the sect. However, slowly but surely... they began to make their way out into the sect.

Virtually everyone who bought a Fantasy Pill would come back a few days later, enchanted and excited, hoping to buy more.

Of course, every time they came back, Bai Xiaochun charged more than the last time. He also made sure to explain the downsides of the pill. After all, as an apothecary, he had a duty to act morally, and thus, would not withhold his mercy, even from the northerners.

"I can't control the strange, unexplainable things that always happen during the concocting process. However, when it comes to the completed pills, I absolutely have to tell my customers what to watch out for." Bai Xiaochun was fully convinced that this was the right thing to do.

He did the same with the Aphrodisiac Pills and the Uncaring Pills, which were slowly becoming more popular. It was almost shocking how much cultivators wanted pills like that.

Aphrodisiac Pills stimulated instinctual behavior, whereas Fantasy Pills fulfilled one's dreams. As for the Uncaring Pills, they counteracted Aphrodisiac Pills, and at the same time, also served to negate the effects of Fantasy Pills. Because of that, the Uncaring Pills actually sold a bit better than the other two.

Before long, the cultivators in the Cloud Order came to the realization that the Aphrodisiac Pills and Fantasy Pills were almost like poison in terms of how vicious they were. And yet, there were still quite a few people who weren't convinced, and eventually reached a state in which they were nearly addicted, and would buy them by any means possible, even secretly.

There were a few grandmasters of the Dao of medicine in the

Cloud Order who managed to get their hands on the pills to research them.... One of them was Ouyang De, who was considered to be the top apothecary grandmasters in the Cloud Order. As such, he came to understand the Fantasy Pills and Aphrodisiac Pills better than anyone else.

“Even before Bai Xiaochun came to the north, I wanted to have a chance to research some of his medicinal pills. Finally... my opportunity has arrived!” Chuckling coldly, he looked down at the Fantasy Pill resting on his palm.

“Let’s see if this lousy Fantasy Pill really works!” Considering his skills with medicinal pills, his research had led him to the conclusion that there wasn’t anything particularly special about the pill.

“The only way to know the truth is to try it personally!” Although he was confident in his own Dao of medicine, he had also acquired an Uncaring Pill, just in case something unexpected happened.

As soon as he popped the Fantasy Pill into his mouth, it melted, and a tremor passed through him. He closed his eyes, and suddenly felt like he was floating. As for the Uncaring Pill in his hand, his grip went slack, and it tumbled off to the side.... Three days later, his eyes opened. He was covered in sweat, and his expression was blank for a very long moment before he murmured, “I achieved my Dao and became an immortal....”

The same thing happened to many cultivators in the Cloud Order. Virtually everyone who consumed a Fantasy Pill would completely ignore the antidote, and would instead revel in the absurd and wonderful experiences that they experienced.

Soon, the Fantasy Pills outpaced the Aphrodisiac Pills in terms of sales. In fact, the Fantasy Pills became like a brewing storm that grew larger and larger in the Cloud Order.

More and more disciples were secretly buying them. Eventually,

it reached the point where the whole thing was out in the open. Ouyang De even went and bought a huge stockpile of Fantasy Pills, all in one shot.

Bai Xiaochun's profits increased rapidly. Much to his excitement, he soon reached the point where he could cultivate the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation.

However, he was also aware that the matter of selling pills couldn't be kept a secret for very long. It wouldn't be long before the devas caught wind of the matter.

And that was exactly what happened. Fantasy Pill sales had gone through the roof. Almost everyone who tried one got addicted. In a short half a month, almost all of the Cloud Order disciples fell in love with Fantasy Pills.

It reached the point where there were simply too many people involved, and soon, accidents started happening. Some disciples weren't able to control themselves after consuming a pill, and would ignore Bai Xiaochun's instructions to always stay in their immortal's caves when under the influence.

“Fly, fly, fly... I'm a mighty bird....”

“Hahaha! Hahaha! I finally became a demigod!!”

“Hit me! Come on, do it. Hit me!!”

The devas finally noticed what was going on. The crazed behavior of a few of the disciples led to an investigation, and the truth was revealed. In less than a month, almost all of the disciples in the Cloud Order had begun consuming Fantasy Pills on a regular basis!

It was a huge affair, and the northern devas were immediately enraged!

They quickly issued orders that Fantasy Pills were prohibited in the sect, and anyone who consumed one would be expelled. The disciples were initially alarmed, but as they awoke from their

reveries and began to put the pieces of the puzzle together, they came looking for Bai Xiaochun.

“How shameless of you, Bai Xiaochun! You tricked us into taking Fantasy Pills!!”

“That’s right. This is all because of Bai Xiaochun. Dammit! Give me back my spirit stones!”

“He made me take the pills. If it wasn’t for him, I would never have even tried one. Damn those Fantasy Pills!”

Some people were afraid, and others regretted spending their spirit stones on the Fantasy Pills. For other reasons as well, everyone started blaming Bai Xiaochun.

Even as the angry mob formed, the twin Master Cloud Lightnings, Feng Chen, and the other devas came to the Cloud Order.

“You violated the covenant, Bai Xiaochun!” Feng Chen shrieked. “Do you have a death wish or something?!?!”

A boom rang out as a powerful divine ability slammed into Bai Xiaochun’s residence, sending him stumbling out into the open.

“I violated the covenant?” Bai Xiaochun yelled angrily, finally glad to be able to let off some steam. “Oh really? Tell me, Feng Chen, which part of the three-point covenant did I violate?! Did I leave the Cloud Order? Did I concoct pills? Did I absorb any of the energy of heaven and earth from the north? Which point in the covenant did I violate, huh? Come on. Tell me!”

“You....” Feng Chen said, pointing at Bai Xiaochun. However, after a long moment, he realized he had nothing to say. Just as Bai Xiaochun had said, he hadn’t violated any of the rules set forth in the three-point covenant....

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings were extremely angry, and yet, had no way to vent their anger.

Bai Xiaochun glanced at the devas, who were all standing there unable to say a single thing, then looked around at the Cloud Order disciples, his eyes sparkling.

“And what about all of you? Let me ask you... did I actually force any of you to buy my pills?

“Didn’t I tell you of all the possible consequences?

“Didn’t I offer to sell you an antidote?

“Didn’t I remind you to be careful where you consumed the pills?

“Are you just too used to bullying me or something? Did you forget that I’m Bai Xiaochun? I’m also a deva, remember? You northerners always push things too far!!” Bai Xiaochun finally released all of the frustration that had been building up over the past months. His voice echoed out like thunder as a huge version of his face appeared overhead, striking fear into the hearts of all the disciples.

In that moment of deadlock, the voice of the demigod patriarch suddenly echoed out from the crystal coffin high above!

“Henceforth, there is no three-point covenant. Instead, we will have a four-point covenant!

“Bai Xiaochun is not permitted to sell anything in the north. If he violates this rule, he will immediately be imprisoned in Lightning Penitentiary!”

Chapter 960: I Can Still Plant Flowers

Along with the demigod patriarch's words came a powerful force that spread out through the sky and drove away the enormous face of Bai Xiaochun. In response, Bai Xiaochun grunted and staggered backward several paces.

Aura teetering unstably, he looked up at the crystal coffin high above. Meanwhile, Feng Chen, the twin Master Cloud Lightnings, and other devas stared at Bai Xiaochun with slight smiles on their faces.

The surrounding disciples breathed sighs of relief. They had been feeling very shaken by Bai Xiaochun moments ago, but the words of the demigod patriarch had driven away his aura. Now that the disciples were completely recovered, they looked at Bai Xiaochun with expressions of loathing.

Although most of them would secretly take more Fantasy Pills if they could, now that the devas and the demigod were present, the only thing they dared to do was show implacable hatred toward Bai Xiaochun.

“Now that you're in the north, it doesn't matter that you're a deva!” That was what most of the people were thinking. In terms of the three-point covenant having a fourth stipulation added to it, it indicated that the matter with the medicinal pills had come to an end.

The fact that Bai Xiaochun was still confined to the Cloud Order and couldn't concoct medicinal pills left everyone feeling very pleased.

“Fudge!” he thought. “One of these days, I'll make sure these northerners sweat bullets when they're in front of me!”

As his anger built, he couldn't help but think about the world treasure the baby girl had mentioned. Although he had been on the

fence before, his mind was now mostly made up.

At the moment, however, he had nothing else to do but use his spirit stones to start doing a bit of cultivation. They wouldn't last for too long, but he was out of other options. Therefore, he set to work cultivating. Ten days went by, but even after plenty of thought during that time, he didn't have any ideas on how to get out of this new impasse.

It was at that point... that the baby girl woke up for a third time.

Even as he was working on his Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation, her voice echoed quietly into his head.

“Have you made a decision yet?”

Taking a deep breath, he gritted his teeth and spoke out into his mind.

“There are a few things I want to say. First of all, let me just point out that this whole thing is very sudden. I find it hard to believe that you plan to just give me this good fortune and let me become your master. You must have another goal you're working toward. However, considering where you come from, I guess I have no choice but to just trust you.

“By the way, I want to know why exactly the Celestial wanted you dead. You never explained that.

“Another thing. Patriarch Spirit Stream called you a true spirit, and said that the mission of the Spirit Stream Sect is to keep you safe. But I'm not him.... My mission is to keep the River-Defying Sect safe, keep my friends safe, and keep myself safe. If you do have some other goals you're working toward, don't use me to get them! If you try something like that, then let me tell you, you will be bringing a huge amount of trouble on yourself. And it will mean trouble for me too, which I don't want. Worse, you would turn the thousands of years of protection that the Spirit Stream Sect gave you into an absurd joke!” There was a determination in his words

that he was sure would strike a bit of fear into the heart of the baby girl.

Actually, he wasn't really sure about any of the things he had just said. He just knew that this baby girl seemed suspicious. Therefore, he had long since come up with this little speech to give her.

The baby girl didn't respond at first. After a long moment passed, she said, "Trouble onto myself? What do you mean?"

Bai Xiaochun had anticipated this turn in the conversation. Eyes brightening, he decided to truly frighten the baby girl, and said, "Do you know who my Master is?"

"No...." the girl responded, sounding a bit surprised.

"The gravekeeper!" Bai Xiaochun replied dramatically.

He was fairly certain that the baby girl was completely shocked by this news. However, before she could say anything else, he continued to speak.

"Do you know who my apprentice is?"

Before she could reply, he provided the answer. "The reigning Hell-Emperor!"

The baby girl was clearly shocked, that much was obvious by the fluctuations he could sense.

At that moment, he felt very proud of his background and status. Of course, it was very disturbing that, despite having such qualifications, and never using them to go around bullying people, the first thing that happened when he came here to the north was that he ended up being severely bullied.

"Therefore, if you lie to me, then you would have an enemy, not just in the Celestial, but in two other powerful people." The threat in his words was very clear. In response, the baby girl maintained her silence for a moment. The truth was that she had a secret

magic which allowed her to assess whether or not his words were true, and therefore, didn't even need to try to figure out if he was being honest.

A long moment passed. When she spoke into his mind again, her voice was completely calm.

"I am a discarnate soul with incomplete memories. Only by becoming one with the magical item will I be able to recall the true reason why the Celestial wanted me dead.

"As far as you becoming my master, view it as an agreement between the two of us, with the main stipulation being that you have to kill the Celestial!

"I'm not keeping anything secret from you. As for the thousands upon thousands of years that the Spirit Stream Sect has kept me safe, well... I won't bite the hand that feeds me. The only thing I want... is revenge!!"

In response to the baby girl's strongly spoken words, Bai Xiaochun's eyes began to shine with determination.

"Very well," he said. "I agree. I'll help you fuse with the world treasure. As far as killing the Celestial goes, that will have to wait until my cultivation base is high enough. Besides, I have no personal enmity with him. To be perfectly honest, I'm not sure how I'll be able to make it happen."

"You will...." the baby girl said, her voice tinged with a profound smile.

Somewhat taken aback, Bai Xiaochun was about to ask what she meant when she changed the subject to explain more about the world treasure.

"The north is my home.... Back when it was a flourishing place, the frigid qi here was the best thing in the world for me.

"In order to fuse with the world treasure, I need to do two things. First... get to the entrance, which is not in the sect itself, but is out

in the northern ice plains. When the time comes, I can tell you the specific location.”

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes flickered. He always liked to have everything planned out in detail before doing anything, and it was only because of how badly the northerners were treating him that he made this decision so quickly. The truth was that he still had some reservations.

The main thing he was curious about... was what the baby girl meant when she said you will.

There was something about her words that he found very unsettling.

“The second thing I have to do is open the entrance. I need this true spirit body of mine to awaken for one hundred breaths of time. That will be enough for me to open the entrance.

“To prepare for that... I need you to collect plenty of northern frigid qi....” Even as she spoke into his mind, his bag of holding vibrated. He quickly sent some divine sense inside, and found that a green leaf had appeared out of nowhere. It floated up from the coffin, out of his bag of holding, to appear right in front of him.

“Frigid qi?” he said hesitantly. The four-point covenant stipulated that he couldn’t absorb the spiritual energy of heaven and earth. But after some thinking, he realized that frigid qi probably didn’t count. After all, spiritual energy came from the Heavenspan Sea, whereas frigid qi naturally filled all of the icy lands of the north.

As he considered this, the baby girl continued to speak into his mind.

“Collect the frigid qi into that leaf. When it becomes an ice leaf... then that means it has enough frigid qi to keep me awake for a hundred breaths of time!

“When you’ve done that, we can go open the entrance to the

world treasure. As for how exactly you collect the frigid qi, I'll leave that up to you." By this point, the baby girl's voice sounded very weak.

"My divine soul is very weak. I need to sleep again. Once you create that ice leaf, send it into this coffin, and I'll awaken.... All my hope rests in you.... You're on your own now...." With that, the baby girl's aura faded away.

Bai Xiaochun blinked a few times, and then sighed. The truth was that he hoped his attempt to frighten the baby girl hadn't caused any friction between them.

The whole matter was actually a good thing for her, for him, and for the River-Defying Sect.

After she was gone, he looked at the leaf and began to consider what to do next.

"How does this leaf absorb frigid qi?" He looked down at the ground beneath his feet. The Cloud Order was built on a massive cloud, a cloud that contained frigid qi. After a bit of thought, he put the leaf down on the ground, but even after waiting for quite some time, he didn't see any frigid qi going into it.

If it weren't for the four-point covenant, he would have many ways to collect the qi he needed. But now, things weren't so easy.

Eventually, he sighed and prepared to put the leaf into his bag of holding. However, as he did, his eyes suddenly went wide as he noticed something in his bag of holding that he'd forgotten about. It was... a seed.

"Moonflower.... I can graft the leaf onto a moonflower!" He had discovered the moonflower on the bone galleon, and after some research, had come to realize that it grew by absorbing frigid qi.

"The four-point covenant doesn't say anything about planting flowers...." At this point, his eyes sparkled with excitement.

Chapter 961: Voracious Moonflower

Smacking his bag of holding, he produced the moonflower seed. “The bone galleon and Ghostmother both come from beyond the heavens. I guess these flowers must come from there too.”

Examining the seed for a long moment, he began to perfect his plan. Eventually, his eyes began to shine brightly.

“Hahaha! The heavens never truly bar one’s way!” He couldn’t feel more pleased about the fact that the four-point covenant really didn’t say anything prohibiting him from planting flowers.

Feeling very exhilarated, he walked out of his residence and looked around for a good place to plant the seed. Eventually, he rubbed his chin and murmured, “It probably isn’t safe to plant it outside. These northerners are all so unreasonable.... Ah, whatever. I’ll just plant it inside.”

Fully convinced that this was the best way to do it, he walked back inside and got to work. Although the ground in the Cloud Order was different from ordinary ground in some ways, in most ways, it was the same. It took a bit of work, but he managed to dig a sizeable hole right in the middle of the room.

Before long, he reached the white, fluffy soil that made up the land of the cloud, which also caused a bit of frigid qi to emanate up into the room. Eyes sparkling, he carefully placed the moonflower seed down into the cloud soil.

Having accomplished that, he sat off to the side, eye sparkling with anticipation and excitement. Almost as soon as the cloud soil was piled back over the seed, it began to tremble as if it were alive.

It was a trembling that stemmed, not from fear, but from excitement. Even Bai Xiaochun could sense how emotional the seed was, and it caused his eyes to shine even more brightly.

“Be a good little moonflower, now. Grow fast and strong....”

Licking his lips, he spent the whole night standing watch. Very shortly after planting the seed, he could see the frigid qi streaming up from the cloud, nourishing it. By morning, the seed had sprouted.

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun really felt like he was on an important mission, and spent day and night tending to the newly sprouted moonflower.

Half a month went by in a flash, and he didn't leave his residence even once during that time. Meanwhile, the talk around the sect hadn't died down at all, and the cultivators were watching his residence closely.

He wasn't in the mood to eavesdrop; he was completely focused on the moonflower. It was already about a hand high, and even had some tiny leaves. Bai Xiaochun was very happy.

In terms of the leaf the baby girl had given him, he had already grafted it onto the moonflower. As the moonflower grew, the leaf began to build up frigid qi.

Everything was going according to plan, and Bai Xiaochun couldn't help but laugh out loud at how things were going.

"Hahaha! There's nothing that Bai Xiaochun can't figure out how to do!" Feeling more proud of himself than ever, he waited for another seven days to pass. At this point, he started to feel slightly discontent.

He had come to find that after grafting the leaf onto the moonflower, it was growing much slower.

"So slow! If things keep going like this, it'll never get enough frigid qi!" Shaking his head, he contemplated the situation for a bit until he came up with an idea of how to catalyze the plant into faster growth.

Normally speaking, catalyzing plants was easy to do. There were plenty of methods within the Dao of medicine to do such a thing.

The easiest way was to use specific medicinal pills. After thinking about it for a bit longer, he looked around carefully, and then sent his divine sense outside.

“The four-point covenant says that I can’t concoct pills, or sell them. It doesn’t say anything about feeding them to flowers.” With that, he fished around in his bag of holding for a handful of medicinal pills, which he crushed and scattered over the moonflower.

As soon as the powder landed, the flower twitched and began to glow with bright light. Almost immediately, it began to suck in the powder.

As it did, the moonflower began to visibly grow faster. In fact, its roots actually extended further down into the cloud.

That, in turn, allowed it to absorb more frigid qi, which instantly caused the temperature in Bai Xiaochun’s residence to drop.

Eyes shining with confidence, he took out some more medicinal pills, crushed them, and dropped them onto the moonflower. The moonflower was like a bottomless pit when it came to medicinal pill powder. It continued to grow larger, sending its roots even further down and out, until they filled a 300-meter area.

Brimming with confidence, Bai Xiaochun continued to feed the plant medicinal pill powder.

“You like everything! What a precious little flower!” Over the three short days which had passed, the moonflower had consumed over a hundred different types of medicinal pills, and was now over a meter high.

Its stalk was as thick as an arm, and it had hand-sized leaves. There was also a bud at the top of it which had not yet bloomed. Under Bai Xiaochun’s care, the flower was growing at incredible speed.

As for the leaf he had grafted onto it, one of its veins now looked

like ice, which he was thrilled about. Soon, the moonflower's roots spread out to fill a 1,500-meter area, which caused Bai Xiaochun's smile to beam radiantly. Then, he pulled out more medicinal pills and began to crush them.

If this were the River-Defying Sect or even the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, Bai Xiaochun might have taken some time to think about the effects of the flower on the surroundings. But here in the north, he wasn't worried about it at all, and in fact, it didn't even occur to him to check....

"I'm not violating the four-point covenant!" he told himself. For the following half month, he continuously crushed pills and fed them to the moonflower....

The moonflower had already reached a shocking height and size, taking up almost all of his residence.

He couldn't help but gasp at the sight of it. At the same time, he realized that, thanks to his constant care... the flower looked different from before.

It almost seemed conscious in a way, and at the same time, apparently liked him. Every time he touched it, the flower would wriggle contentedly.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that, his eyes glittered.

"You're conscious? Alright, be a good flower, now. You need to stop growing, otherwise my room is going to fall apart! Things aren't easy here in the north, so if you destroyed my house by growing too big, it could really cause some problems." After offering some more strict warnings, he took out some more medicinal pills to feed the flower. By this point, he didn't even need to crush them. He would just toss them to the flower, which would grab them with its leaves and absorb them directly.

The flower apparently understood what Bai Xiaochun had told it. From that day on, it didn't grow any larger within the room.

However, its roots continued to expand constantly, voraciously even. By now, its roots had spread throughout the Cloud Order. Furthermore... because moonflowers were not from the Heavenspan Realm, there was something special about them that made them almost impossible to detect. Therefore, no one noticed what was happening.

However, as it grew, it absorbed more and more frigid qi, to the point where the cultivators in the Cloud Order began to notice that something was off.... First of all was the mere fact that there seemed to be less frigid qi than usual.

In fact, in some places, the frigid qi was so lacking that the snow began to melt.... Eventually, the devas took notice of what was happening.

Bai Xiaochun occasionally checked what was happening outside, and when he realized the stir, he patted the moonflower and said, "Moonflower, baby, we don't have much time left. Sooner or later, something bad's going to happen. Not that I care about that, but we can't delay the plan. Is there any way you can grow a bit more quickly? We really need more frigid qi in that leaf." The moonflower quivered, and sent a very vague message back to him. Bai Xiaochun immediately understood. Eyes shining with determination, he pulled a big stack of medicinal pills out of his bag of holding and began handing them over.

The moonflower's leaves eagerly swept up the medicinal pills, after which... a massive rumbling sound filled the entire Cloud Order!

All of a sudden, green sprouts shot up from the ground all over the Cloud Order. Almost as soon as they appeared, they began to suck in the frigid qi, and at the same time, blossom with tiny flowers that looked like moons.

Almost immediately, the frigid qi in the Cloud Order experienced a sharp decline!

The Cloud Order cultivators looked around at the moonflowers, dumbfounded. Within moments, people began to cry out.

“How could there be plants growing in the Cloud Order?!”

“What... what kind of flower is that?”

“Heavens! I’ve never heard of plants appearing in the Cloud Order before.... Aren’t all the plants and vegetation that appear in the north specially adapted for the cold?”

Soon, the entire Cloud Order was devolving into a huge commotion.

“It’s so hot... why... why am I sweating?!?!?”

“Hold on, the frigid qi in the Cloud Order... is so weak!!”

“Heavens! My igloo, it’s... it’s melting!!”

Because of the sudden decline in frigid qi, the entire Cloud Order was starting to melt. In fact, the resulting liquid began to drip down the arm of the huge ice statue that held up the white cloud.

The entire sect was soon astir. The devas flew over, expressions of incredulity on their face.

Before they could even get to the Cloud Order, though, the frigid qi declined so rapidly that all of the ice buildings began to collapse. And that was only the beginning. To everyone’s stupefaction, the thumb of the enormous ice statue, which was now filled with roots... suddenly... began to melt, sending water pouring down the statue....

That caused the entire white cloud to tilt to one side. As for the devas, they stared at the thumb of the statue in utter shock.

“Am I... am I seeing things...?” the twin Master Cloud Lightnings murmured.

Shocked, Feng Chen said, “The pride of the north... the ice statue of the northern battle god... his thumb... is gone?”

Chapter 962: Locked Up!

Massive rumbling sounds filled the Cloud Order as buildings collapsed, and freezing water poured down in all directions. Countless disciples flew out into the air and then stared down at the ice statue with its missing thumb.

After a momentary silence, there was a huge uproar.

“How could this be happening...?”

“What is that plant...?”

“Heavens! What’s going on here? How come so much strange stuff is going on...? First it was those Fantasy Pills, and now the battle god’s thumb is gone....”

Moments later, the twin Master Cloud Lightnings, Feng Chen, and the other devas shivered. Expressions flickering with madness, they erupted with rage.

“Bai Xiaochun!!”

“It was definitely you, Bai Xiaochun!!”

Heaven-shaking, earth-shattering roars could be heard as the furious devas shot toward Bai Xiaochun’s residence.

When the other cultivators from the Cloud Order heard the shouts of the devas, their eyes lit up with ferocious expressions, and they turned to look in Bai Xiaochun's direction.

“Dammit! This was definitely Bai Xiaochun’s handiwork!!”

“He’s a walking disaster! If he has it out for us disciples, that's one thing, but how could he possibly go so far as to damage the Cloud Order’s battle god statue!?!?”

“Kill Bai Xiaochun!!”

Amidst all the shouting, the devas arrived in full fury. Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was inside his residence, nervously

watching the frigid qi pouring into the leaf.

In the blink of an eye, the leaf was seventy percent ice. Clearly, if he had enough time, then it would be a simple thing for him to create the ice leaf the baby girl had asked for.

Unfortunately, there wasn't enough time. When he heard the shouting outside, he quickly grabbed the leaf and threw it into his bag of holding. At the same time, he urgently told the moonflower, "Get back into seed form!"

The moonflower didn't need any prompting. It could sense the critical danger, and within moments, it wilted and went dry. All of the life force in the plant was sucked back in until it was nothing more than a seed.

There was no time for Bai Xiaochun to look at it closely. Grabbing it, he threw it into his bag of holding along with the leaf.

It was in that very moment that a huge boom rang out, and his residence exploded.

Bai Xiaochun tumbled off to the side, looking very bedraggled. Surrounding him were countless furious Cloud Order disciples, plus the twin Master Cloud Lightnings, Feng Chen, and all the other devas. Everyone looked like they were out for blood.

"Feeling suicidal, Bai Xiaochun?!?!" the twin Master Cloud Lightnings raged. Now that Bai Xiaochun's residence was destroyed, the withered husk of the moonflower was out in the open, visible to everyone present.

"We didn't kill you for selling those Fantasy Pills, so then you went and struck at the foundation of the north! You will die this day, Bai Xiaochun!!"

Feng Chen was so angry that his eyes overflowed with killing intent. Without any hesitation, he shot toward Bai Xiaochun and unleashed a divine ability of the trump card level.

Bai Xiaochun dodged out of the way and then shouted out in a

loud voice, “Are you northerners rebelling against the lands of Heavenspan or something?!”

“You’ve had it out for me from the moment I arrived! First you had your three-point covenant, and I just endured. Then after I sold some medicinal pills, you changed it to a four-point covenant!

“Now I just planted a flower, and you’re trying to say I broke the agreement?”

By now, he had decided to throw caution to the wind; he really had reached the point where he couldn’t stand the north.

“You want to attack me, so you have to come up with a bunch of excuses, don’t you!?” Unleashing the power of his cultivation base, he caused a huge face to appear up in the sky.

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings and Feng Chen were both frustrated to the extreme by the unspeakable suffering they were enduring. Bai Xiaochun couldn’t have been more annoying to them, especially Feng Chen, who had come to find that his idea of the three-point covenant was turning out to harm himself more than anyone.

Back when he came up with the idea, he could never have imagined how much of a disaster Bai Xiaochun could be. A three-point covenant wasn’t nearly enough to contain him, and in fact, it seemed to make him worse.

Even more frustrating was how sharp-tongued Bai Xiaochun was, and how special his status was. They obviously couldn’t kill him no matter how much they hated him, a fact which was profoundly vexing to all of the devas.

By now, their hearts were filled with regret. If they could go back in time, they definitely wouldn’t have placed any restrictions on Bai Xiaochun, and would have just let him do whatever he wished....

The devas weren’t the only ones who felt so torn. The ordinary

disciples were both enraged, but at the same time, were wailing in their hearts. Only now did they truly realize how much of a catastrophe Bai Xiaochun could be.

“This is all Feng Chen’s fault! He started out in the Lightning Order. That’s why he had Bai Xiaochun put in the Cloud Order! He’s had it out for us all along!”

“That’s right! Send Bai Xiaochun to the Lightning Order! Release the Cloud Order from this torment! Our battle god... is missing a thumb!!” The Cloud Order disciples were truly enraged, and soon, many such shouts filled the air.

When Feng Chen heard what everyone was saying, a very unsightly expression appeared on his face, and his hatred for Bai Xiaochun deepened.

When the demigod patriarch saw the deadlock, he sighed and rubbed the bridge of his nose. Even he was starting to feel very annoyed with Bai Xiaochun.

However, it was exactly as Bai Xiaochun had said. He hadn’t violated the covenant in any way....

“I shouldn’t have agreed to any covenant.... We can’t keep this up. Whenever we tell him not to do something, he thinks of a way to cause a bigger disaster.” Frowning, the demigod considered kicking Bai Xiaochun out of the sect. However, considering all the restrictions they had placed on him, if they simply let him go after what he had done, it would be a huge loss of face for the north.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, a cold flicker appeared in the demigod’s eyes. Instead of making a personal appearance at the Cloud Order, he sent out a Dharmic decree!

“Henceforth, we will have a five-point covenant! Within the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect, Bai Xiaochun will not tend flowers, plants, animals, or ghosts. He will not forge equipment or concoct pills. He will not plant, refine, raise, or work with anything!!”

His voice echoed out like heavenly thunder, filling the entire sect. However, the cultivators from the Cloud Order and the devas did not react like they had in the past. Instead they were worried, and couldn't help but wonder how long it would take before the covenant needed a sixth point, and then a seventh....

Every time Bai Xiaochun found a loophole, they would be in deep trouble. Eventually... they could even imagine a scenario in which Bai Xiaochun managed to kill them all, and destroy everything in the northern Heavenspan region.

The northerners weren't particularly happy with the demigod's Dharmic decree, and neither was Bai Xiaochun. As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, these northerners were completely outrageous. How could they possibly have added another stipulation to the covenant!?

Gritting his teeth, he decided to throw caution to the wind yet again. He opened his mouth to speak, in the hopes of getting the demigod to simply kick him out.

However, that was when a second Dharmic decree was issued!

“Heavenspan Special Guard Bai Xiaochun, despite not having violated our agreement, harmed the foundation of the Cloud Order. For this crime, he shall be exempt from the death penalty, but will not escape all punishment. Lock him up in Lightning Penitentiary! Until the Heavenspan emissary leaves, all of his freedoms will be restricted! If he resists, take his life!”

Bai Xiaochun tried to speak up in his defense, but as soon as the Dharmic decree echoed out through the sect, a burst of power shot down from the crystal coffin. It transformed into an enormous hand of lightning that grabbed him and forcibly threw him into the black cloud on the other side of the waterfall.

The devas were very excited by this, especially Feng Chen, whose eyes shone brightly. There was little need to mention the ordinary disciples, who went wild with joy upon hearing Bai Xiaochun's

fate.

“He’s finally gone!!”

“Even demigods would be tormented by the lightning in Lightning Penitentiary! Bai Xiaochun brought this upon himself!”

“This is exactly how it should be!”

Cheering filled the Cloud Order, and the devas all sighed in relief as they looked over at the black lightning cloud.

A scornful gleam passed through the eyes of the twin Master Cloud Lightnings. “No matter what heaven-toppling abilities he has, in the north, he has no choice but to bow his head!”

Meanwhile, the demigod patriarch in the crystal coffin finally breathed a sigh of relief. Looking over at the Lightning Order’s black cloud, he decided that he really had managed to save face for the north. Furthermore, he was absolutely certain that Bai Xiaochun wouldn’t cause any problems in Lightning Penitentiary.

After all, the worst prisoners imaginable were locked up in Lightning Penitentiary. Although the prison wasn’t very full, even demigods who were locked up inside would be tormented to no end, much less devas.

“Things are finally going to quiet down.” The demigod patriarch closed his eyes.

Chapter 963: What?! Aaaiiieee!

The Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect had two ice statues, one holding up the pure white Cloud Order, the other holding up the pitch black Lightning Order!

At the moment, a piercing shriek was echoing out deep within the black cloud that housed the Lightning Order. Of course, it was Bai Xiaochun.

“I hate the north!!”

It was a shriek filled with bitterness and defiance. However, no matter how loudly he screamed, his voice did not go beyond... Lightning Penitentiary, where he had been imprisoned for three days already.

He was already wracked with despair. Within the depths of the black cloud, he was surrounded by layer upon layer of restrictive sealing spells, creating a cell that was only about 30 meters of space in which he could move around.

Beyond the borders of the cell were innumerable lightning bolts, each one as thick as an arm and abounding with so much destructive power that it caused Bai Xiaochun's face to go pale.

“Complete and utter bullying!!” he muttered, shivering as he sat there, looking out at the darkness and the lightning. Calling out to the heavens and cursing the hells brought not even the slightest response. As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, this was the unluckiest he had ever been in his entire life.

“Completely ridiculous. Three-point covenant, four-point covenant, five-point covenant.... All of that I could deal with. But I can't believe they actually locked me up!” He felt like he was about to go crazy, and couldn't come up with any effective methods to do anything about the situation.

Not only could he not escape, every few hours, lightning would

gather around his cell and then strike him repeatedly.

There was only one way to deal with the shocking lightning, and that was to draw upon his cultivation base power. Unfortunately, Lightning Penitentiary was cut off from the spiritual energy of heaven and earth, which led Bai Xiaochun to the conclusion that, eventually, he would run out of power to stave off the lightning.

“What am I supposed to do?” he sighed. Right now, his main hope was that Du Lingfei would finish her mission soon and come to free him.

“I’m gonna remember this, you northerners!” he said loudly. “You just wait. After I become a demigod, I’m going to get my revenge!” With that, he let out a roar of frustration.

However, as soon as he did, a sarcastic chuckle could be heard from off to the side.

“Become a demigod? Even then you won’t be able to get revenge.”

“Who’s there?!” Bai Xiaochun said, looking around. His divine sense had been restricted as soon as he was thrown into his cell, but his ordinary senses had not. However, during the past three days, he hadn’t detected any signs of life anywhere nearby.

As he looked around vigilantly, he saw the clouds off to the side seething, and then gradually turning translucent, revealing another cell roughly 300 meters away.

It was also thirty meters across, formed by countless restrictive spells. Just like his own cell, it was surrounded by dancing lightning, which occasionally shot into the cell to strike at an emaciated figure who sat there cross-legged!

It was an old man wearing threadbare garments. He was little more than skin and bones, and his aura was very weak. Whenever the lightning struck him, he would shiver slightly, and yet, his expression never changed. Apparently, while he couldn’t stop the

physical torment of the lightning bolts, his mind had long since grown used to the pain.

His hand was currently settling back down onto his knee; apparently, not even the restrictive spells could completely hold his will in check, allowing him the basic ability to control the clouds around him.

When Bai Xiaochun looked into the old man's eyes, it felt like his eyes were being stabbed, eliciting a gasp.

"Listen, kid, I'm a demigod, and even I'm stuck here. So my advice is that you adjust that little oath of yours. Maybe you can aim for becoming a celestial?" The man grinned, and as his yellowish teeth were illuminated by the lightning, he looked particularly sinister. Bai Xiaochun shivered.

"I've been in here for years now," the man continued, "and I can tell you that people who get locked up here don't tend to last for long. Now that I think about it, it's been a while since anybody new came around.

"Come come, kid. Can you dance? Do a sexy little dance for me, and if I like it, I might just give you a secret magic that can help you deal with the pain." The old man eyed Bai Xiaochun up and down, eyes shining with a bizarre light as he chuckled.

Bai Xiaochun had been startled by the man's sudden appearance, but had now recovered. And he could sense that he and this man were similar in that, after having been locked up, they both got a bit braver.

Glaring at the man, he said, "Shut up, old man. I worked as a prison guard in the past, and eventually I lost track of how many prisoners like you I mopped the floor with." Snorting coldly, he stuck his chin up and looked away.

The old man laughed heartily. "The stubborn type, huh? I really like young bucks like you. You know, 3,000 years ago there was

another stubborn punk who got locked up here. He only lasted a month before he was twisting and turning in front of me, begging for my secret magic. Whenever you're ready, I'll be waiting for you."

Apparently, he was very pleased at the additional amusement that Bai Xiaochun had brought into his life

Bai Xiaochun was already feeling quite annoyed at this man's gaze and laughter. After giving him another good glare, he ignored him. After all, he just needed to wait for Du Lingfei to finish her mission, and then she would come back and think of a way to get him out.

Two hours later, the lightning around his cell began to build up more and more, creating something like a lightning storm around him.

When the lightning storm struck, he drew upon his cultivation base to defend himself. The sight of all that lightning was really shocking. After all, the destructive power in only one bolt wasn't anything to really worry about, but from what he could tell, there were hundreds of thousands of them.

He wasn't the only one to have to deal with the lightning in that moment. The old man was also struck. However, the man's expression didn't so much as flicker because of it. Instead, he looked over at Bai Xiaochun with ill intentions flickering in his eyes.

"You still have spiritual power now, so you can defend yourself. But in another ten days or so, you'll run out.... And that's when you'll really start to 'enjoy' yourself.

"The power of the lightning builds up over time, you know. Eventually, it reaches the point of being the most horrific suffering in heaven and earth." Although the old man trembled physically as he spoke, it didn't affect his voice at all.

“You know what I love to hear the most? The screams of people getting struck by lightning. I just close my eyes and revel in the beauty of it....” Licking his lips, he gazed at Bai Xiaochun, his eyes brimming with malice.

Bai Xiaochun was in no mood to pay any attention to the man. The lightning continued to strike him for a full hour before finally fading away. In the process, a large portion of his spiritual power was drained away.

He now only had seventy percent left, a fact that caused an unsightly expression to appear on his face.

“This isn’t going to work....” he thought, looking around apprehensively at all the lightning. After some calculations, he came to the conclusion that his spiritual power really would be drained in about ten days.

Although he was confident in his fleshly body power, the fact that this old man, a demigod, was in such tattered shape, left him worried that he wouldn’t be able to match up.

Five more days flew by. Whenever the lightning struck, his spiritual power levels got lower and lower, and the cackles of the old man grew louder.

Bai Xiaochun was feeling very frustrated. On the sixth day, however, he suddenly looked up, his eyes bloodshot as he stared at the surrounding lightning bolts.

He had considered many options, but none had seemed viable. That meant he only had one choice left....

“Back on the Heavenspan Sea, when Eldest Brother was going through his tribulation, I actually consumed the tribulation cloud. That cloud had lightning in it... and in addition to the destructive power it contained, it also had life force!

“I’m pretty sure my apprentice was helping me back then, so it’s hard to say... if I can do the same thing in here.” After vacillating

for some time, he saw the lightning building up into a storm, and he gritted his teeth.

“Might as well give it a shot!” He rose to his feet, drawing upon his cultivation base, although not in a way to defend himself.

Hundreds of thousands of lightning bolts swirled into a massive storm than then pierced into his cell and appeared right in front of him. Just as it was about to smash into him, he roared, opened his mouth, and sucked in a breath!

The old man was initially stunned, but then began to laugh in mocking fashion.

“Another fool who thinks he can consume the lightning. Looking to die, huh? Years ago, I called myself the Lightning Ancestor, and was the only rogue cultivator demigod in the north. But not even I dared to try to consume lightning bolts. Over all the years that I’ve been here, I’ve seen a lot of-- uh... what?” All of a sudden, the old man’s eyes bulged so wide that they nearly dropped out of his head.

“Freaking... w-w-what... what are you doing?!?!”

Chapter 964: I Have A Divine Ability, Old Pal!

Despite the crashing lightning which surrounded him, the Lightning Ancestor was so shocked he very nearly leaped to his feet.

As Bai Xiaochun inhaled, he sucked in ten lightning bolts. He did so with the utmost caution, and after breathing them in, he unleashed the power of his cultivation base to protect himself from further attacks.

Afterward, it was to Bai Xiaochun's delight that he found that he could easily break the lightning down inside of him, sending shocking power coursing through his energy passageways.

The ten bolts of lightning were equivalent to ten days of ordinary cultivation!

His eyes began to shine brightly, and he was already panting in excitement. Looking around at the lightning, he no longer seemed scared, but instead, worked up.

"I actually did it!" Reining in the power of his cultivation base, he took another deep breath, this time sucking in a hundred lightning bolts.

From a distance, it looked like numerous glowing dragons roaring and howling as they were consumed by Bai Xiaochun. A healthy flush covered his face as crackling sounds filled him, which came from spiritual power equivalent to a hundred days of cultivation.

That much spiritual power caused his heart to begin to race with excitement. Without the slightest hesitation, he began to work on his Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation. By this point, the outline of a moon was rapidly forming inside of him.

Furthermore, his aura was now much stronger than before.

The Lightning Ancestor watched with a blank expression on his face as this unimaginable scene played out. He had been born and raised in the north, and was a demigod. Back in his glory days, he had called himself the Lightning Ancestor because of his deep and profound skill with thunder and lightning. However, not even he would dare to consume lightning.

He knew better than anyone that the lightning bolts in the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect were extraordinary, and were reflections of the will of heaven and earth. The destructive power they contained was enough to shatter virtually anything in creation.

Therefore, the scene playing out right now caused his mind to spin, and made it difficult for him to breathe.

“Don’t tell me that I was wrong all along... and the lightning... really can be consumed?” He suddenly wondered if all of his time in incarceration had been a huge lie. Barely able to think straight, he suddenly opened his mouth and tried to breathe in some of the surrounding lightning bolts.

A few dozen bolts entered his mouth, whereupon his eyes nearly exploded. A bloodcurdling scream erupted out, and then he began to shake violently and cough up blood. He only recovered after a long moment passed, whereupon he looked over with hidden bitterness at Bai Xiaochun, who was in the middle of breathing in a third batch of lightning bolts.

This time, he breathed in several hundred bolts... and looked like he was nearly drunk with enjoyment....

The clear difference between himself and Bai Xiaochun caused the Lightning Ancestor’s heart to be slammed by waves of shock. Furthermore, the unfairness of it all almost drove him to madness.

“How could this be happening...? It’s impossible...! I’m a demigod! I’m the Lightning Ancestor of yore....” Even as he descended into madness, the current lightning storm faded away.

After consuming several hundred lightning bolts, Bai Xiaochun could tell that he was almost finished with the first level of the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation. Licking his lips, he sat down and began to wait eagerly for the next lightning storm.

“This Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect is actually treating me pretty well. They locked me up in a place most people find a torment, but for me... is a truly blessed land!” The more he thought about it, the more excited he got, until he finally stood back up and started laughing out loud.

When the Lightning Ancestor saw that he really wasn't hurt at all, and that his cultivation base had actually progressed, a wave of excitement rose up in him. Eyes shining, he cried out, “Hey, old pal....”

Eyebrows dancing up and down, Bai Xiaochun looked over and said, “Whaddya want, ya old monkey?”

The Lightning Ancestor's face twitched at having been called ‘old monkey’, which was obviously payback for how he had called Bai Xiaochun a ‘young buck’.

“So, um... how did you do that, old pal?” The Lightning Ancestor tried to make sure that he was the picture of amiability, as though he didn't mind being called old monkey at all. After he finished speaking, he simply sat there, looking at Bai Xiaochun with anticipation.

The truth was that he had been locked up in this place for many years, and had seen far too many people killed by the lightning. He had seen some people try to swallow the lightning just the way Bai Xiaochun had, except that they all died as a result. Others had been unable to take the torment, and committed suicide. This was his first time seeing anyone succeed at swallowing lightning. Not only had Bai Xiaochun come out unscathed, his cultivation base had been refined in the process....

“Come come, old monkey,” Bai Xiaochun said proudly, swishing

his sleeve. “Can you dance? Do a sexy little dance for me, and if I like it, I might just give you a secret magic that can help you deal with the pain.”

“You!!” the Lightning Ancestor shouted angrily. He was a demigod, and despite having been locked up in prison for so many years, still had his pride. Not even the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect’s demigod patriarch had ever treated him disrespectfully.

But in response to his anger, Bai Xiaochun glared right back at him.

Veins began to bulge out on the Lightning Ancestor’s face and neck, and his eyes turned as dark as night. A moment passed, and then he stood up and clenched his fists. Although he had long since been drained of spiritual power, he still emanated the pressure of a demigod, which caused rumbling sounds to echo out.

In response, the clouds in the area began to churn and roil, startling Bai Xiaochun to the point where he backed up a few steps. Then the gaunt, almost emaciated Lightning Ancestor took a deep breath, and began to twist and turn according to some peculiar rhythm. There was actually something lithe and elegant to his movements....

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes went wide at the sight of it, and he almost forgot to breathe.

Almost unable to take the sight, he backed up and said wryly, “You’re... you’re really dancing!”

The Lightning Ancestor ignored Bai Xiaochun, continuing to dance for a bit before sitting back down. Then he glanced out at Bai Xiaochun out of the corner of his eye, looking very proud and aloof as he said, “So what? I’ve been locked up here for a long time, and had to come up with some way to pass the time. When I’m bored, I do a bit of dancing. Three circles on the left, three circles on the right, [shake those shoulders, shake that butt](#). What, I’m not

allowed to do that or something?”

Upon hearing such a reasonable argument, which was clearly backed by conviction, a look of admiration appeared in Bai Xiaochun's eyes. All of a sudden, he realized that this Lightning Ancestor was clearly a genius. Most people would go crazy after being imprisoned for so many years, but this old man had figured out a way to pass the time.

“Senior,” he said with complete sincerity, “considering your dancing abilities, I think that after I get free, I'm definitely going to give you a nice collection of medicinal pills.”

At that point, the Lightning Ancestor looked over at Bai Xiaochun with shining eyes. “Alright, cut the crap. You called me an old monkey and I danced for you. Now, are you going to teach me how to consume that lightning?”

Seeing how hard the old man had worked to get what he wanted further increased the admiration Bai Xiaochun felt in his heart. With that, he went on to explain a little bit about the lightning. Leaving out any guesses about Bai Hao, he explained that he had once consumed some heavenly tribulation, and had sensed that it contained life force. That was what gave him the inspiration to consume the lightning bolts here in Lightning Penitentiary.

The Lightning Ancestor didn't believe that at all, but to his frustration, no further questioning got anywhere. Eventually, another lightning storm built up, and Bai Xiaochun excitedly consumed more lightning and proceeded on with more cultivation. That in turn caused the Lightning Ancestor's envy to grow.

After ten days passed, Bai Xiaochun had consumed enough lightning to get his Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation to the great circle of the first level. He was now just on the verge of breaking through to the second level.

Finally, the Lightning Ancestor couldn't take it anymore. Looking over at Bai Xiaochun, he said, “Hey, old pal, it seems to me

that the two of us were destined to meet each other here. You know, I can tell that you hate the north quite a bit, and so do I.... We're essentially allies.... How about you teach me that lightning absorption technique, and I'll promise to help you take care of the north after we get out. What do you say?"

Bai Xiaochun glanced at the Lightning Ancestor but didn't respond. Continuing to absorb lightning, he pushed his Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation closer and closer to the next level.

According to his calculations, it would only take a few more lightning storms to achieve his breakthrough!

When the Lightning Ancestor realized that he was being ignored, he gritted his teeth and loudly said, "Listen, my friend, I have a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering divine ability. Want to trade?"

However, Bai Xiaochun didn't even look over at him, causing his anxiety to mount.

"It's really an incredible divine ability! It's called the One Hundred Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations! The Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect has it too, but it's an incomplete version. Cultivating that version will cause your divine soul to split apart. However, I have the full version, and it's beyond belief!"

Stunned, Bai Xiaochun looked over at him. "What did you say it's called?"

"The One Hundred Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations!"

Some of you may remember a very, very similar song from ISSTH. That's because it's the same song. Before anybody jumps to the conclusion that it's a connection between the two novels, let me remind you that it's actually a very common song in China, usually sung by school children when they exercise in class. For one version of what it looks like, [check out this video](#). It's usage in ISSTH and here is mostly because of the silly factor of the song.

Chapter 965: Stop Annoying Me

Bai Xiaochun was more than a little surprised. He knew of this divine ability, and had personally fought against it; it was Master Cloud Lightning's trump card. After combining into his united form, he had used the eighth transformation to become the forefather of all humanity, which was the first time that Bai Xiaochun's Undying Emperor's Fist had ever been defeated.

That memory remained fresh in Bai Xiaochun's mind, and in fact, he often thought about that technique, which had been used against him. Sadly, it was a secret magic of the north that was never passed on to foreigners. Besides, even among northerners, the people who qualified to cultivate it could be counted on one hand.

And yet, contrary to all expectation, this old man said that the technique actually encompassed one hundred transformations. Bai Xiaochun very nearly gasped as a result, but managed to keep his true reaction concealed. Glaring over at the Lightning Ancestor, he said, "Who do you think you're fooling, you old monkey? Do you think I've never seen the Cloud Lightning Forefather divine ability before?!"

The Lightning Ancestor blinked a few times. However, he didn't show any of the embarrassment he might have if he had been trying to pull a scam. Actually, he had hoped that the name of the technique would attract Bai Xiaochun's attention. Smacking his forehead, he laughed dryly and said, "I'm getting old, and my memory isn't what it used to be. I just remembered that it's actually the Eleven Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations. I'm definitely not mistaken this time. It has eleven transformations!"

In order to prove that what he was saying was completely and utterly trustworthy, he went on to add some more information.

“The first nine transformations allow a cultivator to form a Dharma Idol of the forefather of all humanity. Then they can merge with that Dharma Idol to become the forefather. The tenth transformation turns one’s left eye into a shining moon, and the eleventh transformation, which is the most shocking of all, turns the right eye into a blazing sun!

“Although there are eleven transformations, the final two transformations are far more powerful than the others. In fact, they each have an additional three levels of transformation power. That means that if you cultivate the technique in its entirety, it essentially has the power of seventeen transformations!”

By this point, Bai Xiaochun was completely stunned, and his heart was racing.

“The Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect coveted my technique,” the Lightning Ancestor continued, “and used contemptible means to steal it from me. However, they never got the final two transformations. In fact, that’s why they imprisoned me here, in the hopes of getting them.” As of now, he could see that Bai Xiaochun was intrigued, and therefore he went on to brag a bit more. As to whether his boasting was truthful or not, only he could tell.

Bai Xiaochun wasn’t very convinced that the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect would imprison this person just to get two transformations. There were simply too many methods that could be used to extract such information. For example, they could put a person like Bai Xiaochun into the prison as a mole, and fool the Lightning Ancestor into giving up the information willingly.

But he was still intrigued, especially by what the Lightning Ancestor had said about the eleventh transformation... that it could transform the left eye into a bright moon.

“I cultivate the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation, but it’s incomplete.... It only contains the moon incantation. If I could

break through to the great circle, I could get my cultivation base to the mid Deva Realm.... But that's impossible, since it's incomplete.

“But this eleventh forefather transformation... has to do with a moon. I wonder if I could combine them....” Having reached this point in his train of thought, his heart began to beat even faster. Although he couldn't be sure of whether or not it would work, he decided that he had to try.

However, he also realized that he couldn't let that show. This old monkey had been locked up for long enough that his brain seemed to be a bit addled, but he was still a demigod expert, after all.

Getting the technique from him would come at a price, and Bai Xiaochun knew that if he wasn't careful, he could end up with a flawed version. If that happened, it could cause problems for his cultivation base. Furthermore, he had no idea how exactly he was able to consume lightning, and therefore had no way to pass that information on to the old man as payment....

“I need to convince him that he doesn't need the technique itself, only the spiritual energy....” Since it was impossible to pass on the lightning consuming technique, he would need to think of a way to take the energy of heaven and earth that he had absorbed and transfer it to the Lightning Ancestor.

The key to that would be to alter the structure of the lightning. Ignoring the Lightning Ancestor, he continued consuming some lightning, and worked on a way to do just that.

The Lightning Ancestor waited for some time, but when it became clear that Bai Xiaochun wasn't very interested, he began to get more anxious.

Another seven days went by. Bai Xiaochun continued to work on his cultivation, and his aura continued to grow more powerful. The endless amount of lightning bolts in the Lightning Penitentiary were the perfect fuel for cultivation, and over the week which had passed, he had consumed well over ten thousand

bolts.

A quick calculation revealed that he had already accomplished a whole sixty-year-cycle's worth of cultivation. It was so shocking that he almost couldn't believe it was true.

"The Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect is truly the ultimate land of good fortune for me!" At this point, his Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation had reached the great circle of the second level.

"At this rate, it will only be half a month... before I break through to the third level, and reach the peak of the early Deva Realm!" He was so excited that, even if the demigod patriarch of the sect came to free him, he would definitely come up with a way to make sure he stayed locked up.

"In fact... if I can break out of the third level, then my cultivation base should reach the mid Deva Realm!"

"If I reach the mid Deva Realm, then Master Cloud Lightning wouldn't count for crap against me!! And that numbskull Feng Chen couldn't touch me. I wouldn't even be scared of all of the northern devas put together!" His eyes glittered as he imagined that glorious scene, and then he mused about how much he had fallen in love with this lightning.

Another thing he had worked on was the ability to remove the destructive power of the lightning and leave behind only the spiritual energy. So far, he was only able to succeed with one out of ten lightning bolts, and even that was difficult.

Meanwhile, the Lightning Ancestor sat there watching the excited Bai Xiaochun's aura get stronger and stronger as he consumed the lightning bolts. Eventually, he couldn't hold back any longer.

"Hey, old pal...." he said. "Come on, why don't we trade techniques? You teach me how to consume the lightning, and I'll teach you the Eleven Cloud Lightning Forefather

Transformations!”

“Not interested!” Bai Xiaochun replied, not even looking over as he continued to consume lightning bolts.

“This is a classified secret magic!” he said anxiously. “There are only a few techniques in all of the lands of Heavenspan that can compare to it!”

“I said I’m not interested. Can you quiet down a bit? Don’t even think about getting my lightning consuming technique. There’s no way!” Frowning in annoyance, he continued to work on absorbing lightning.

The Lightning Ancestor was so angry he almost started blurting out curses. In fact, he had already decided that he would try to get Bai Xiaochun to unwillingly cultivate his transformation technique in a way that would get him to split into two parts. However, on the outside, he could only continue to smile. By this point, he had come to the conclusion that it wasn’t so much that Bai Xiaochun wasn’t interested in his technique. Rather, he prized his lightning consuming technique so much that he wasn’t willing to trade it for anything.

And he had nothing else to bargain with. Gritting his teeth, he said, “If you can’t give me the technique, can you... maybe pass some of the energy of heaven and earth over to me? I’ll trade my technique for that!”

Bai Xiaochun’s heart immediately began to pound. However, he continued to pretend to be disinterested. The Lightning Ancestor continued to pepper him with questions, though, until he finally waved his hand, causing one of the lightning bolts to sweep through his body, dispelled its destructive nature, and then returned it to the palm of his hand.

“I’m somewhat interested in that technique of yours, but I don’t have the time to cultivate it now. You want some consumable lightning, right? Here, take a bolt. And then shut up, keep quiet,

and don't bother me."

A rumbling sound echoed out as the bolt of lightning he had just cleansed passed through the restrictive spell and shot toward the Lightning Ancestor. The Lightning Ancestor was stunned. Never could he have imagined that the spiritual energy he had worked so hard to get would be thrown over to him so casually. In fact, he didn't even need to give up his technique to get it, just leave Bai Xiaochun alone.

There was no time to contemplate the matter at length right now. He could tell that there was something different about this bolt of lightning, and therefore, he quickly breathed it in. Instantly, cracking sounds rang out as his parched insides were suddenly enlivened. Although there wasn't much spiritual energy in the lightning bolt, it had been 10,000 years since he had absorbed even the slightest bit. To him, it was such a beautiful thing that he immediately began to shiver.

"Hey, old pal...."

"Can you please just stop annoying me!? Argh!!" Looking very angry, Bai Xiaochun threw over another lightning bolt.

Worried that he would irritate Bai Xiaochun too much, the Lightning Ancestor quickly absorbed the lightning and then kept his mouth shut. A few more days passed, but Bai Xiaochun never even looked his way, causing his anxiety to grow.

If he hadn't been given any of the spiritual energy to begin with, he might have continued to be jealous, but would have been able to control himself. But now, having tasted the sweet taste of that energy, his thirst was growing more and more intense.

"Um...." he began cautiously. Bai Xiaochun looked over with a glare and threw him another bolt of lightning. And that was how the following several days went.

Eventually, it reached the point where Bai Xiaochun had given

him eight lightning bolts. The Lightning Ancestor's desire mounted, and he came to be more and more convinced that Bai Xiaochun really didn't care about the divine ability.

If he did, why would he never say anything about it? All he asked was for silence. From the way Bai Xiaochun threw the lightning bolts out, it was like he was a rich moneybags, and the Lightning Ancestor was a beggar.

During the time that passed, Bai Xiaochun reached the third level of the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation. His aura was now more powerful than ever, and finally, he began to think about the Lightning Ancestor's Eleven Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations.

One day after just having thrown out another lightning bolt, he casually said, "Hey, old monkey. Tell me more about this supposed One Hundred Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations or whatever it is that you're always bragging about."

Chapter 966: Why Are Young People Nowadays So Reckless?

The Lightning Ancestor hesitated, not very pleased with how Bai Xiaochun was looking at him.

“Listen, ya old monkey. Times are different now. That technique of yours really isn’t that interesting. Think about it. The spiritual energy I’ve given you so far is like a drop in the ocean to me. If you want to be stingy, then you can go ahead and just keep wishing for my spiritual energy. Even if I get more, I won’t give you any!”

The Lightning Ancestor immediately started to get nervous. Smiling wryly, he sighed and thought, “Little punk! I guess it doesn’t matter whether or not you’re doing this on purpose.... Fine, you win!”

Although he had come to be a bit muddle-headed after all the years of confinement, if he couldn’t see what Bai Xiaochun was doing by this point, he didn’t deserve to have lived for so long.

No matter how he thought the matter over, there didn’t seem to be any other option for him. Besides, the spiritual energy he wanted so badly was under the complete control of Bai Xiaochun. And that couldn’t possibly be the handiwork of the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect.

Most importantly, although the Eleven Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations was powerful, it didn’t seem likely that the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect’s demigod patriarch would hatch a plot this complicated to get it.

In fact, the more he thought about it, the more he had to praise Bai Xiaochun for doing things this way. After all, not only had he come to hold the Lightning Ancestor’s fate in his hands, but he had also manipulated his feelings perfectly. First he had done his work with the lightning, and had then hooked him and reeled him in

with the lure of spiritual energy.

From beginning to end, he had controlled things masterfully.

After coming to all of these realizations, the Lightning Ancestor finally sighed and looked over at Bai Xiaochun.

“Ah, whatever,” he said. “Alright kid. I don’t need that much energy from the lightning. A hundred bolts will do. Enough to create a spirit seed inside of me!

“As far as my divine ability goes... well, listen up!” Eyes shining, he went on to explain the full mnemonic for the Eleven Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations.

He didn’t hide any aspect of the technique. He explained it all in full. He acted like a true demigod, explaining everything in minute detail. After all, he was worried that Bai Xiaochun wouldn’t give him the one hundred lightning bolts he needed.

It was a valid concern. The Lightning Ancestor knew that when dealing with a moneybags like Bai Xiaochun, he needed to be generous.

Bai Xiaochun felt a bit embarrassed at how shameless he had been. Clearing his throat, he quickly fixed the Eleven Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations mnemonic into his mind.

The more he studied it, the more excited he got, and by the time he finished, his eyes were shining brightly with excitement.

“Even right now, I can tell that it’s possible to combine it with my Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation!!” Delighted, he started tossing lightning bolts in the dozens over to the Lightning Ancestor. He only stopped when he reached fifty.

Choosing not to hide anything, he politely explained his intentions. “I hope you can understand, Senior. I need to be cautious. I’ll give you the rest when I leave.”

The Lightning Ancestor completely understood. Snorting, he

closed his eyes and went about absorbing the spiritual energy from the lightning bolts and beginning work on his spirit seed.

At that point, Bai Xiaochun breathed a sigh of relief. It had been exhausting to both work on his cultivation and also figure out a way to get the divine ability from the Lightning Ancestor.

Now that he had succeeded, he could focus fully on consuming lightning and furthering his cultivation.

He had been incarcerated for about two months now, and during that time, had pushed his Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation all the way from the first level to the third. His cultivation base had also progressed, and his aura was stronger, very close to the mid Deva Realm.

Anyone outside who heard that would be completely shocked, and also overcome with envy.

“Right now, I have two main goals. First is to break out of the third level of the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation, and thus step into the mid Deva Realm!

“After that... I need to cultivate the Eleven Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations, and fuse it with the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation!” After taking a moment to examine the crescent moon that existed inside of himself, he sent his divine sense out and waited for the next lightning storm.

As the lightning bore down on him, he opened his mouth and inhaled deeply!

He breathed in with all his might, causing the lightning to distort as it headed into his mouth.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

In one breath, he sucked in several hundred lightning bolts. Deafening crashing sounds filled him, and intense energy of heaven and earth began to course through him. The crescent moon glittered, and his Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation pushed closer to

breaking through.

“Just a bit more!” His hands flashed in a double-handed incantation gesture, and then waved through the air in front of him. Hundreds more lightning bolts then shot toward him. Before long, an hour had passed.

At that point, the lightning in the area began to thin. Although Bai Xiaochun had consumed quite a bit of lightning this time around, when compared to the boundless amounts that had gathered, the number was not very significant.

Although he wasn't thrilled that the lightning was fading away, he knew that it would come back in about four hours. That was how things had gone consistently throughout the past two months. All of a sudden, he realized that if he changed his method, he might be able to speed up his cultivation.

Having reached this point in his train of thought, he shot to his feet and performed another double-handed incantation gesture. His cultivation base immediately began to rotate at top speed, forming a huge vortex.

As the vortex spun and rumbled, a significant gravitational force spread out. He also opened his Heavenspan Dharma Eye, and threw in the powers of gravity and repulsion that he had researched so many years ago.

Before long, more than half of the dissipating lightning was actually moving toward him.

The intense rumbling sounds that resulted attracted the attention of the Lightning Ancestor, who opened his eyes, looked around, and gasped.

“What are you trying to do?!”

Bai Xiaochun had no attention to spare for the Lightning Ancestor. He kept his cultivation base rotating at top speed, drawing in hundreds of lightning bolts every time he opened his

mouth.

As a result, his cultivation base continued to climb. Four hours passed, during which time he absorbed roughly ten percent of the total amount. At that point, a new lightning storm began to build.

After absorbing as much as he could from the new storm, the lightning began to dissipate, so he used the same method to force it to stay behind.

Because of that, a sea of lightning built up around him, fully 5 kilometers across, and terrifying to behold.

As for the Lightning Ancestor, he used a special technique to move his cell further away from Bai Xiaochun.

“This guy’s crazy! That’s not cultivation, that’s suicide!” Outside of the 5-kilometer lake of lightning, he looked back, heart trembling with fear.

Bai Xiaochun was also feeling very apprehensive. However, if you ride a tiger, it's hard to get off. Despite having dispelled his cultivation base vortex, the sea of lightning had reached critical mass, and begun to swirl on its own, and also attract more lightning to it.

“What did I do this time...?” he thought nervously. “Well, no time to worry about it now. Gotta absorb this lightning!”

Howling, he absorbed the lightning like mad, which caused massive amounts of spiritual energy to surge through him.

However, he could only breathe in a few hundred lightning bolts at a time, and had to close his mouth after doing so.... Therefore, there were still plenty of lightning bolts left to strike him!

He tried to dodge, but it was too little, too late....

Massive rumbling sounds could be heard as over 10,000 lightning bolts slammed into him, provoking an agonized shriek. There was simply no way for him to consume all of the lightning, and now it

felt like the lightning was actually eating him!

The pain caused tears to spring out of his eyes. Even as he tried to dodge the lightning strikes, he realized that the massive influx of spiritual energy had pushed the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation toward the very limits of the third level!

His cultivation base rose rapidly, pushing him far beyond the early Deva Realm, and very close to the mid Deva Realm!

“Who cares about that!? My poor little life is the most important thing of all!” Trembling, he backed away from his original spot, but his movement tugged at the lake of lightning, causing an imbalance that sent tens of thousands of lightning bolts in his direction. A bloodcurdling scream rang out as they slammed into him.

Even as he screamed, his Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation broke through, and his cultivation base climbed up into the mid Deva Realm!

Off in the distance, the Lightning Ancestor stared in complete shock.

“I guess times really have changed. Why are young people nowadays... so reckless in their cultivation?”

Chapter 967: The Lightning Order, Astonished

The Lightning Ancestor was completely flabbergasted to see the lightning slowly dissipating from around Bai Xiaochun, who stood there trembling, smoke rising up from him. He almost looked like he had been fried to perfection by the tens of thousands of lightning bolts.

However, his cultivation base was no longer in the early Deva Realm... he had stepped into the mid Deva Realm!!

His incomplete Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation had reached its great circle. His left eye now had a bright moon in it that seemed ready to fly out of him at any moment, and appear in the sky as a second moon!

The manifestation of this divine ability would cause any ordinary person to feel as if their heart and mind were being replaced by a moon.

But all it did to Bai Xiaochun was leave him trembling physically and mentally. The truth was that he normally wouldn't ever use a method like this to achieve a cultivation base breakthrough.

The mere thought of being slammed by so much lightning struck terror into his heart....

"I'm done with cultivation...." he said, scowling on the verge of tears. As of this point, even the slightest crackle of thunder caused him to flinch.... Right now, he couldn't have been more afraid of another convergence of lightning.

Even as he looked around anxiously, and tried to decide whether or not to start moving around, a new lightning storm began to build up. Perhaps because of the influence of the previous convergence of lightning, the gravitational force generated this time was massive. Within moments, more lightning had built up

than the last time, covering everything with sparkling brightness.

Bai Xiaochun screamed and scrambled backward, and yet that didn't stop the lightning from descending toward him.

"I don't need it...." he shrieked. The Lightning Ancestor was long gone, huffing and puffing as he propelled his cell far off into the distance. Upon looking over his shoulder, he began to curse. "Dammit! No consideration for the elderly! Does he think it's easy for me to move this cell at my age!?!?"

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Shortly before....

Something big was happening outside in the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect. The black cloud that housed the Lightning Order was beginning to move.

It was almost like an earthquake, something strong enough that all of the Lightning Order cultivators felt it immediately.

"Did the ground just move?"

"There's no way. We're on a big black cloud! How could that black cloud move...?"

"Do you guys get the sense... that our Lightning Order's lightning reserves seem low...?"

Ever since Bai Xiaochun had been incarcerated, the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect had been oddly at peace. The Cloud Order cultivators had felt at ease from the beginning, whereas the Lightning Order cultivators had initially been worried. However, as time passed, they gradually calmed down as well. After all, everyone had complete and utter faith in Lightning Penitentiary.

Even the devas felt no apprehension whatsoever. At long last, they were able to experience what life had been like before Bai Xiaochun arrived in their sect, and it left them sighing with heartfelt relief.

However, even as people sighed in contentment, the Lightning Order's black cloud suddenly trembled, which immediately attracted attention. What was even more astonishing to the Lightning Order cultivators was how, moments later, the cloud shifted beneath their feet yet again!

At the same time, muffled rumbling sounds could be heard, leading to cries of alarm within the Lightning Order.

“It did move!!”

“Something's wrong!!”

“The lightning... guys, look at that lightning....”

Everyone looked down at the black cloud, and could see that fewer lightning bolts danced beneath its surface than before. Furthermore, every few moments, some of the remaining lightning bolts seemed to disappear into the depths of the cloud.

Almost immediately, ill premonitions rose up in the hearts of many Lightning Order disciples. Up in the black coffin high above, the devas' expressions flickered, and they suddenly started to get very nervous.

“Don't tell me it's Bai Xiaochun again!!”

“Dammit! It couldn't possibly be him! He's been locked up....”

It was at this point that the Lightning Order's black cloud trembled yet again, even more violently than before. At the same time, loud rumbling sounds could be heard.

It was at that exact same moment that, deep within the black cloud, in the middle of that massive convergence of lightning, Bai Xiaochun screamed and fled as quickly as possible. The restrictive spells that made up his 30-meter cell had long since been destroyed, giving him free access to attempt to escape. And yet, that did him no good. No longer were there tens of thousands of lightning bolts around him. Now, there were hundreds of thousands!

No matter where or how he fled, the lightning followed, and if he slowed down for even a moment, he would be enveloped.

And if he stopped moving, then even more lightning would build up. By this point, he was going crazy.

“How could this be happening...?” he moaned. It was a moment of deep crisis, and therefore, he finally just gritted his teeth and said, “Dammit! Fine, I’m going to go for broke. That lightning is made of spiritual energy, right? Who the hell would be scared of that!?!?” Letting out a roar to psyche himself up, he drew upon the mnemonic the Lightning Ancestor had taught him, and began to cultivate the Eleven Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations!

He suddenly lurched to a halt, which instantly allowed tens of thousands of lightning bolts to hone in on him, then smash into his body.

Having his body slashed by lightning in this way was painful, but because of how tough he was, was easy to endure for the time being. At the same time, massive amounts of spiritual power began to flow through him, until he began to swell up like a balloon....

“Cloud Lightning Forefather, First Transformation!” His vision swam as he was wracked with pain, but he focused on the divine ability, using the spiritual energy to fuel the transformation.

Instantly, rumbling sounds filled him as he grew to a height of 30 meters, and began to exude a wild and barbaric air.

He had already succeeded at the first transformation!

But things weren’t over yet. As massive amounts of spiritual energy went wild within him, he began to work on the second transformation! Furthermore, he bolstered the effect with the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation, and the power of his left eye!

He could only attempt a true combination by carefully analyzing everything one step at a time. Furthermore, there was always a chance of failure.

Under normal circumstances, a failure would require him to stop and build up more spiritual energy before trying again. After all, combining these two powerful techniques demanded that he be in peak condition.

But now, with boundless amounts of spiritual energy at his disposal, he didn't need to sit around waiting. As soon as he failed, he could try again.

He tried again and again, over ten times, until suddenly his left eye began to shine with dazzling moonlight. As it did, his 30-meter-tall forefather form looked very different than Master Cloud Lightning's had.

An indescribable aura emanated out from him, and the moon sigil within his eyes shone with such powerful light that it seemed capable of controlling all of the darkness of the night!

"It worked!" However, now was not the time to revel in excitement. The spiritual energy inside of him drained rapidly, almost beyond his control. Howling, he began the second transformation of the Cloud Lightning Forefather technique!

Rumbling sounds echoed out as he grew to a height of 60 meters! The second transformation... was a success!

And of course, he was not finished. Next was the third transformation, and then the fourth!

As the innumerable lightning bolts surrounded him, rumbling sounds could be heard as he grew to a height of 90 meters, and then 120 meters!

Furthermore, the wild and barbaric aura of the technique, combined with a fleshly body that had mastered the Undying Bones, made his transformed form even more powerful. By now, he had surpassed the limits of fleshly body power!

If the twin Master Cloud Lightnings were here to see what was happening, they would be shocked to the core. After all, the power

Bai Xiaochun was capable of with this transformation far surpassed them!

That was especially true because of the moon sigil in his left eye, which further added to his power!

Under normal circumstances, Bai Xiaochun would be very excited. But right now, he could tell that his body was reaching a limit in its ability to absorb the lightning from the black cloud. It had nothing to do with the divine ability, only his own body. In some ways, it was exactly the same as when consuming medicinal pills.

When that critical point was reached, the lightning would no longer be nourishing, but instead, harmful, and even destructive!

As Bai Xiaochun grew stronger, the lightning bolts grew more numerous. By now, hundreds of thousands of them were showering down onto him.

Tears of fear leaking out of his eyes, he decided that he had no choice but to hope that one more transformation would fix the situation.

“Cloud Lightning Forefather, Fifth Transformation!”

Chapter 968: Detonation!

Rumbling sounds erupted as Bai Xiaochun's 120-meter form grew to a height of 150 meters! The fifth transformation of the Cloud Lightning Forefather was complete!

He now radiated a terrifying aura, and the moon sigil in his left eye gave him additional power equal to three transformations. In total, he now wielded the power of... the eighth transformation!

Back when Master Cloud Lightning had actually reached the eighth transformation, his power surpassed the late Deva Realm and came close to the great circle.

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun was now even more shockingly powerful than that!

However, that brought him no joy, only fear, because after the fifth transformation was complete, his body reached the point that it could not accept any more of the lightning from the black cloud.

The lightning writhed madly as it shot toward Bai Xiaochun, driving fear into his heart as he scrambled backward. He was now much faster than before, and yet, far more lightning had gathered.

Now, instead of having to deal with hundreds of thousands of lightning bolts, there were over a million....

It was a profoundly shocking scene. Off in the distance, the Lightning Ancestor was completely gobsmacked, and was shaking physically. By this point, he had completely forgotten about the fifty lightning bolts that Bai Xiaochun still owed him, and was doing everything he could to get his cell as far away as possible.

“You absolutely, positively must not get close to me.... don't do it!! My old body can't take this.... Kids nowadays are all psychos....” However, it was in that exact moment that Bai Xiaochun happened to look over, and caught sight of the Lightning Ancestor.

When their eyes met, the Lightning Ancestor screamed, and drew upon all the strength he could muster to send his cell shooting in the opposite direction. As for Bai Xiaochun, he looked like the picture of grief and indignation as he did everything he could to get out of the range of the lightning. Sadly, more and more lightning was building up with every moment that passed....

As Bai Xiaochun fled, his eyes wide with terror, he suddenly sensed that the lightning was starting to tremble with dangerous instability....

“It's gonna blow?!?!?” His scalp tingled madly as he screamed and pushed forward with greater speed.

Off in the distance, the Lightning Ancestor's eyes were about to pop out of his skull. However, at the same time, he was starting to get a bit excited.

“It's gonna blow? Great! The crazier the better. Maybe... this will be my chance to get out of here!!”

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In the outside world, the black cloud was shaking nonstop. Virtually no lightning bolts were visible at all from the outside, and the cloud was starting to emanate an unsettling aura, as though something explosively dangerous were brewing deep inside of it.

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings, Feng Chen, and the other northern devas were all racing toward the cloud, and when they saw what was happening, their faces fell dramatically.

They tried to send divine sense into the cloud to determine what exactly was happening, but because of the unusual properties of Lightning Penitentiary, they were unable to make out any specific details.

“What exactly is going on here?!?”

“Dammit! This is definitely Bai Xiaochun's doing!!”

Of course, the other three devas were quick to cast blame on Master Cloud Lightning and Feng Chen.

“It’s your fault, Feng Chen! You should never have come up with the idea for the three-point covenant!!”

“And you’re to blame too, Master Cloud Lightning! This Bai Xiaochun is a walking disaster! Why the hell did you bring him here to begin with!?!?”

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings and Feng Chen had very unsightly expressions on their faces, but there was nothing they could say in response. As everyone looked on nervously, a stream of divine sense erupted from the crystal coffin which shook the hearts of even the devas. It quickly entered the black cloud, whereupon an enraged roar erupted out that shook heaven and earth.

“Bai Xiaochun!!”

At the same time, the demigod patriarch materialized in midair. He looked extremely anxious, and didn’t even take the time to say anything. He simply waved his hand out into the air!

A powerful blast of wind erupted out, swept over the black cloud, grabbed all of the cultivators on it, and then teleported them off into the distance.

In the exact moment that the demigod patriarch accomplished that, a shocking boom erupted out, the likes of which had never been heard in the north before. The source? The black cloud which made up the Lightning Order, which had just exploded!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!!

The noise was so loud that countless cultivators immediately began to cough up blood. Even the devas were shaken, and were shoved backward through the air.

All of the buildings which rested on the black cloud land mass were reduced to ash as innumerable lightning bolts erupted out in

all directions. It almost looked like a dragon made of lightning were climbing up into the sky.

Then came the screaming shockwave, which rolled out in all directions, causing the sky to dim. As for the black cloud itself... much of it was reduced to nothing more than rubble.

Cracks began to spread out in the Lightning Order's battle god statue.... It was almost as if the entire Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect had come under attack. The Cloud Order's statue was missing a finger, and now the Lightning Order's statue was visibly damaged.

The twin Master Cloud Lightnings hovered there in complete shock. Feng Chen's jaw was hanging open, and his eyes were wide. The other devas reacted in similar fashion. As for the demigod patriarch, he was so angry that he was shaking, and his hair was standing on end.

The Lightning Order cultivators who had been teleported away were stunned to the extreme. The Lightning Order now looked completely different from before, and the change had occurred so quickly that they had no chance to even react.

In contrast, the Cloud Order cultivators were all feeling very blessed that Bai Xiaochun had not been locked up in their part of the sect....

At the same time, they were even more terrified by his ability to cause catastrophes!

“This Bai Xiaochun... must not be provoked....”

“The deva patriarchs are out of their minds. Everything was fine until they had to go and confine him to the Cloud Order. First, he went and sold medicinal toxins to our Cloud Order cultivators, and then he destroyed half of the Cloud Order with his flower....”

“Then they had to go and lock him up in Lightning Penitentiary, which is supposedly strong enough to keep even demigods in

check. But this guy... actually blew the entire place up!! And look, almost half of the Lightning Order's black cloud has now been destroyed!!”

“Heavens, is this guy even human?!?! How did the cultivators in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect manage to stay alive all this time?!?”

“Everybody says that his pill concocting is the stuff that can shake heaven and earth. But he never even concocted medicine here in the north. And look how it ended up.... I bet if he had concocted medicine, he would have destroyed all of the northern Heavenspan River!!”

Before long, a cacophony of conversation filled the air. The entire Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect was abuzz. And that was when... people began to take notice of a bedraggled figure climbing up from within the rubble of the black cloud....

Bai Xiaochun's face was pale, and he was dripping with sweat. After all, he had very nearly been fried to a crisp just now.

“I'm definitely never going to absorb any more lightning ever again. It's way too dangerous!!” Even as he crawled out into the open, he heard a howl of rage echoing from above.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” It was the demigod patriarch, whose rage surpassed heavenly might, and startled Bai Xiaochun so much that he jumped up into the air. The demigod patriarch took a step forward toward Bai Xiaochun, and yet, before he could do anything else, suddenly looked off in a different direction.

“How dare you try to escape, Lightning Ancestor!!” The demigod patriarch shoved his hand out, causing the air off in the distance to shatter, revealing the emaciated Lightning Ancestor who, without pausing for even a moment, spun in place and shot off into the distance like a bolt of lightning.

The demigod patriarch had no time to worry about Bai Xiaochun.

Face turning very grim, he sped off in pursuit of the Lightning Ancestor. Catching him was far more important than punishing Bai Xiaochun.

The events playing out had Bai Xiaochun sweating nervously.

“I'm not sticking around the north any longer than I have to. I need to get out of here!” At this point, he completely ignored the Dharmic decree of the Celestial, and fled from the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect.

However, as he did, Feng Chen let out a cry of rage and shot after him.

Feng Chen actually had taken a liking to Du Lingfei, and therefore, hated Bai Xiaochun even more than could be imagined. He had been very proud of this three-point covenant, and had imagined that it would be a big torment to Bai Xiaochun. Never could he have imagined that instead, Bai Xiaochun would turn the tables and throw the entire sect into chaos. And that only served to fuel Feng Chen's hatred.

Immediately drawing upon a trump card, he transformed into a crimson bolt of lightning that brimmed with destructive power as it shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

However, Bai Xiaochun was just as angry, and spun in place to face him.

Chapter 969: I've Had Enough Of You People!

“I've had enough of you, Bai Xiaochun!” Feng Chen howled. His crimson lightning bolt form moved with incredible quickness, bringing him to appear in front of Bai Xiaochun in the blink of an eye. He radiated the cultivation base fluctuations of the mid Deva Realm as he sent a devastating attack directly toward Bai Xiaochun's forehead!

“Yeah, well I've had enough of you, Feng Chen!!” And that was absolutely the truth. The instant he arrived in the north, he was hit with the three-point covenant, which was then upgraded to a four-, and then a five-point covenant....

Normally, Bai Xiaochun was not the type of person who liked fighting and killing, but he had been pushed so far that the personality he had developed in the Wildlands finally showed through.

His eyes flashed with anger as Feng Chen closed in, to the point where the moon sigil in his left eye began to shine brightly. Then he waved his hand, causing the previously blue sky to suddenly turn as dark as night.

The darkness covered up the sun, but at the same time revealed a bright moon, whose light illuminated everything down below. All of the northerners who were touched by that light suddenly felt as if their hearts, minds, and even their divine souls were being absorbed.

Feng Chen gasped as a sensation of imminent crisis swept through him. He even backed up a bit, and yet, that was when Bai Xiaochun grimly spoke two words.

“Fallen Moon!”

The sky turned even darker than before, and intense rumbling

sounds filled the air. At the same time, a moon sigil appeared on Feng Chen's red lightning bolt, which began to absorb the surrounding moonlight, causing it to shine brighter and brighter.

RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Suddenly, the lightning bolt exploded, revealing Feng Chen's human form. However, the moon sigil was still visible on him, as though it had been branded on him, all the way down to his bones!

As the moon sigil began to grow larger, Feng Chen screamed in terror at the realization that he was being harmed, not just physically, but in his cultivation base!!

The function of the moon sigil was to assimilate the spiritual energy of heaven and earth that existed inside of the human body. And when it completed its work, that person would be killed in body and soul!!

“What divine ability is this!?!?”

Feng Chen felt like entire mountain peaks were battering him. There was simply nothing he could do to fight back against Bai Xiaochun's Fallen Moon technique. Bai Xiaochun didn't even need to touch him. As long as the moonlight hit Feng Chen, his injuries would mount, something he had only ever witnessed demigods accomplish.

And yet here Bai Xiaochun was doing that very thing. It left Feng Chen profoundly shaken, blood spraying out of his mouth as his eyes shone with terror and disbelief.

Although all of this takes a bit of time to describe, from the moment Feng Chen transformed into a crimson lightning bolt, to the instant that lightning bolt shattered and he was severely injured, only a brief span of time elapsed. None of the onlookers had a chance to react before Feng Chen's bloodcurdling screams filled the air.

Not even Bai Xiaochun could have guessed that his Sun-Moon

Vast-Sky Incantation would be so shockingly powerful. However, that didn't stop him from performing an incantation gesture with his right hand, and then waving his finger out in front of him!

Instantly, the bright moon in the darkness above glittered dazzlingly, and the moonlight seemed to focus and shine directly onto Feng Chen. That in turn caused the moon sigil burned into Feng Chen to spread out to cover his entire body.

His screams intensified. It was a moment of deadly crisis in which Feng Chen was shaking violently, unable to even wrap his mind around what was happening. Without any warning, he was placed in a moment of life or death, something that seemed impossible, considering that he was in the mid Deva Realm. He had always been a chosen in the north, a person who had won countless battles, and yet... he was totally powerless against Bai Xiaochun's divine ability!

"I refuse to accept this!!" he howled, eyes shining with madness. However, he was beginning to fade from existence as shafts of moonlight stabbed out of him. He almost seemed to be turning into moonlight itself.

Of course, Feng Chen wasn't the type to just sit around and wait to die. Although his fingers were almost completely gone, he still managed to raise his hand and touch the top of his head.

A boom rang out as his body exploded, sending the fluctuations of a deva-level self-detonation rolling out in all directions.

Borrowing the force of the explosion, his nascent divinity shot into the open and prepared to flee. However, that was when, to his utter astonishment, he discovered that... his nascent divinity also had a moon sigil on it!!

"Impossible!" Feng Chen cried. "This is impossible!!"

He couldn't have been more astonished. By now, the sensation of crisis had intensified to the point where he was now certain he was

about to die!!

“It's a true Daoist magic!!” the twin Master Cloud Lightnings shouted urgently. “Get to the crystal coffin, Feng Chen! Hide there! Bai Xiaochun, how dare you kill people here in the north! Things are not finished between us and you!!”

Flying forward at top speed, they began to combine their two forms, causing the fluctuations of the late Deva Realm to roll out in all directions.

He wasn't the only one; the other three devas could also tell that it was a critical moment. Unleashing their cultivation bases, they turned into four beams of light that all shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

Trembling, Feng Chen heeded the advice of Master Cloud Lightning, ignoring the burning state of his nascent divinity to shoot at top speed toward the crystal coffin. His hope was to take advantage of the interference provided by the other devas to get into the demigod's immortal's cave, and cut himself off from the light of the bright moon.

His plan worked, but by the time he evaded the moonlight, causing the moon sigil to vanish, his nascent divinity had been eaten away by nearly half. Although he would eventually recover, he had experienced an indefinite drop in cultivation base!

There he sat in the crystal coffin, shivering in fear. He had just barely evaded death, and even though he didn't want to admit it, he now felt utter terror at the mere thought of Bai Xiaochun.

“His cultivation base is definitely not in the early Deva Realm. He's... in the mid Deva Realm!! But, even in that level... how could he be so incredibly strong!?!?”

Meanwhile, the other four northern devas were trembling in shock, and the ordinary cultivators who were watching the events play out much more so. All of them were both shocked and terrified by what Bai Xiaochun had done.

“Heavens! This Bai Xiaochun... he... he’s so strong!!”

“I made fun of him a while back. I laughed at him openly! I....”

“Hold on a second. If he was this strong before, why would he let himself get pushed around? What if... what if he actually experienced a breakthrough after arriving in the north?”

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was dodging attacks from Master Cloud Lightning and the other devas, his expression grim, and his eyes bloodshot.

“Alright you northerners, I’m done. Lord Bai has had enough of you people! Bring it on! Let’s fight!”

Since he had already attacked one of them, he decided to throw caution to the wind. Without any hesitation, he unleashed the full power of his cultivation base, causing Mid Deva Realm fluctuations to erupt in all directions. By now, the darkness was fading from the sky as it returned to normal, making it very easy to see a huge face up above, which radiated the might of heaven and earth.

“Mid Deva Realm.... Dammit, he really did have a breakthrough!!” After sensing Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation base fluctuations, Master Cloud Lightning felt like he was going crazy.

He felt completely and utterly powerless in the face of Bai Xiaochun’s power. Back in the trial by fire, he had tried to kill him, only to be flummoxed first by his medicinal pill, and then by him addressing Du Lingfei as ‘wifey’. He had started out with the complete advantage, but had eventually reached the point of being completely trampled on by Bai Xiaochun.

His original assumption had been that, once in the north, in his home sect, he would definitely be able to heap torment onto Bai Xiaochun. Never could he have guessed that, despite his extreme hatred of Bai Xiaochun, Bai Xiaochun would first sell medicinal pills, then plant flowers, and then even force the demigod patriarch to step in and imprison him.

But then....

“Is this Bai Xiaochun even human? Not only did he destroy Lightning Penitentiary, he achieved a cultivation base breakthrough? How could he possibly have done something as difficult as breaking through to the mid Deva Realm? He... he really did break through!?!?” The other three devas were reacting with madness similar to Master Cloud Lightning. However, despite their rage, they could do nothing but watch helplessly as Bai Xiaochun avoided everything they sent at him.

“He's a hedgehog! No matter how you try to grab him, you end up getting poked.... Fine, then forget his weird techniques. Let's just overpower him!” Eyes flashing with loathing, Master Cloud Lightning shot toward Bai Xiaochun. Apparently, the other devas understood what he was thinking, as they too advanced, their murderous auras raging.

Chapter 970: Xiaochun Overturns The Heavens!

Four devas were joining hands to attack Bai Xiaochun with deadly force. The cultivators from the Cloud Order and the Lightning Order were all watching with rapt attention. Based on what everyone could tell, it didn't matter if Bai Xiaochun were even stronger than he had already proven to be, he would still die for his brazenness!

“This Bai Xiaochun is strong, but he's forgotten that he isn't in the east anymore. This is the north!”

“Hmph! How dare he throw his weight around here in the north. We're definitely going to show him a thing or two!”

“I refuse to believe that Master Cloud Lightning and the other devas all working together can't kill that one measly Bai Xiaochun!”

Everyone was now starting to calm down, and were showing nothing but open disdain toward Bai Xiaochun. Meanwhile, Master Cloud Lightning and the other devas were closing in rapidly.

Cold light flickered in Bai Xiaochun's eyes. He had been restraining himself ever since he arrived in the north, but now that he had four devas all showing open killing intent, his anger erupted in full.

Instead of backing up, he advanced, waving his hand to summon the Waterswamp Kingdom. Water vapor roiled in all directions as a huge clawed hand shot out.

Everything shook violently, catching all of the devas completely by surprise. Master Cloud Lightning wasn't affected very deeply, but the three other devas gasped, and one of them even coughed up blood.

“Bai Xiaochun!” Master Cloud Lightning, the top deva in the

north, roared in rage at this. Transforming into a beam of bright light, he shot directly toward Bai Xiaochun, simultaneously shouting, “Cloud Lightning Forefather: Seventh Transformation!!”

An ear-splitting rumbling sound spread out as Master Cloud Lightning rapidly grew to a height of 210 meters. He truly looked like the forefather of all humanity, with a cultivation base and battle prowess that skyrocketed seemingly without limit. In an instant, he was past the late Deva Realm, and was like a tempest bearing down on Bai Xiaochun.

However, that was when Bai Xiaochun’s eyes flashed, and he shouted, “Super Suppression Forefather, Fifth Transformation!”

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Bai Xiaochun also grew rapidly in size, until he was 150 meters tall, with a wild and barbaric aura, and a burly, savage appearance. Within his left eye was a moon sigil that shone with dazzling light, which made his fifth transformation... as powerful as the eighth!

“This is impossible!!” Master Cloud Lightning’s eyes bulged on the verge of popping out of his skull. The reason he hadn’t resorted to his eighth transformation was that it was too draining. Furthermore, how could he possibly have ever guessed that Bai Xiaochun would actually use the exact same divine ability as him!?

They slammed into each other, and a massive boom echoed out in all directions. The air vibrated as Master Cloud Lightning tumbled backward, blood spraying out of his mouth.

Although he was shaken physically, he was even more shaken mentally, and was panting in disbelief. The Cloud Lightning Forefather technique was a secret magic that belonged to the north. And yet, in completely unexpected fashion, Bai Xiaochun had used it right in front of him, a fact that instantly shoved him further toward madness.

Even worse was the fact that he had only used the fifth

transformation, and yet had completely overpowered his own seventh transformation. It was utterly maddening.

“Bai Xiaochun,” he roared, “how dare you steal a secret legacy technique of the north!!” Without any hesitation, he utilized his eighth transformation, reaching a height of 240 meters, whereupon he charged back into the fray.

“That’s bullshit and you know it!” Bai Xiaochun shot back. “You’re using the Cloud Lightning Forefather technique, and I’m using the Super Suppression Forefather technique! The names are totally different! What are you, blind? Or deaf? Or both?!” Snorting coldly, he launched forward, slamming into Master Cloud Lightning.

As they separated from the exchange, Bai Xiaochun’s qi and blood was boiling. Eyes shining with the desire to do battle, he lurched backward, performed a double-handed incantation gesture, and then shouted out at the top of his lungs

“Living Mountain Incantation!”

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!

Countless rocks and boulders began to fly through the air, covering Bai Xiaochun’s 150-meter frame and causing him to grow larger and taller. Within moments, he was a 300-meter-tall stone golem.

The combination of the Forefather Transformation with the Living Mountain Incantation produced shocking results, and shook everything in the area due to the sheer stunning levels of energy involved. All of the northern cultivators gasped, and began to cry out in alarm.

Furthermore, the energy of the Living Mountain Incantation caused a massive wind to spring up, a wind so powerful it stung the faces of all cultivators it touched. Master Cloud Lightning couldn’t help but gasp in shock.

He suddenly had the intense premonition that Bai Xiaochun... was too much for him to handle!

“Dammit. Dammit! How could he have become so strong?!?!?! Only someone in the great circle of the Deva Realm could possibly be a match for him. And he hasn’t even used that trump card fist strike yet....” At that point, Master Cloud Lightning’s pupils constricted, and he began to back up as quickly as possible. However, even as he did, Bai Xiaochun began to stride forward!

As he went after Master Cloud Lightning, Bai Xiaochun let out a low-pitched growl that contained heavenly might, forcing the other devas to brace themselves and fight back against it.

One of them transformed into a black lightning bolt, another split up into nine cloud projections, and the third summoned an enormous furnace. Then all three of them shot forward to block Bai Xiaochun’s path.

Bai Xiaochun didn’t even look at them.

“Get the hell out of my way!” Roaring, he waved his hand, sending a blast of wind out to meet them.

The black lightning bolt shattered, the nine cloud projections were ripped to pieces, and the enormous furnace broke into countless fragments. The three devas all coughed up blood, expressions of disbelief overtaking their faces as Bai Xiaochun flew right past them.

“Too... too strong!!”

Bai Xiaochun hadn’t slowed down at all. As he closed in on Master Cloud Lightning, he clenched his hand into a fist, causing a black vortex to spring up around it.

“You ambushed me in the trial by fire, Master Cloud Lightning. And afterwards, you were completely unreasonable! And now you want to rely on your late Deva Realm cultivation base to kill me?

“You’ve been pestering me constantly since I got to the north.

Well now, on this day, we're going to settle all our debts and grudges!"

Master Cloud Lightning's mind was reeling, especially considering that he could plainly see Bai Xiaochun's fist, and the black vortex spinning around it. Face flickering wildly, he flew backward and screamed, "What are you people standing around for!? Activate the sect's grand defensive spell formation!!"

The other three devas all began to shout orders.

"Activate formation!!"

"Power up the grand spell formation!!"

As for the surrounding northern cultivators who had been standing around in stunned shock, they finally recovered from their reveries. Faces pale, they immediately began to go about activating their sect's grand spell formation!

It wasn't a process that took a lot of time. Even as Bai Xiaochun closed in on Master Cloud Lightning, a massive force sprang out from the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect, creating a misty shield that emanated a formidable force of expulsion. Not only was Bai Xiaochun stopped in his tracks, but he was even pushed backward out of the sect.

Bai Xiaochun frowned as he was shoved in the opposite direction, completely beyond his control.

When Master Cloud Lightning and the other devas saw that, they finally breathed sighs of relief. The fight had spun out of control too quickly, leaving them more shaken with every second that passed.

However, even as they breathed sighs of relief, Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered.

"Spell formations don't work against me!" Drawing upon the Undying Hex, he bypassed the force of expulsion and pierced back through the spell formation shield. Shockingly, there was nothing

that could stand in his way!

Rumbling sounds could be heard as he appeared in front of Master Cloud Lightning, the black vortex around his fist rapidly devouring the spiritual energy in the area. An enormous, shadowy emperor appeared behind him, which then merged into his fist. The Undying Emperor's Fist!

When that fist struck, anything in creation could be destroyed!

Master Cloud Lightning's pupils constricted, and his mind spun crazily. There was no time to ponder what to do, and no way he could dodge out of the way. He could only howl at the top of his lungs and draw dangerously upon his energy to unleash his ninth transformation!

In the blink of an eye, he was 270 meters tall and bracing himself for Bai Xiaochun's blow!

A boom rang out that surpassed anything from before. All sound in the area was crushed, to the point where it almost seemed silent.

Then the shockwave erupted, shaking the entire Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect to its foundations. At the same time, Master Cloud Lightning's eyes went wide, and he screamed uncontrollably.

"Nooooo!!" Blood erupted from his mouth like a waterfall as he was flung backward head over heels. He could no longer maintain his transformed form, and he shrank back down and then split apart into two people, both of whom continued to tumble backward, blood spraying out of their mouths....

The older brother among the two had it better off than the younger one. The younger brother simply couldn't withstand the force, and was ripped to shreds....

Chapter 971: Thrown Out

The younger of the twin Master Cloud Lightnings had no time to even feel the terror of impending destruction. His body was simply destroyed by the massive, explosive attack!

His nascent divinity flew out into the open, eyes blank as he stared around at the devastation. It was in that moment that a stream of divine sense appeared that far surpassed devas. It descended in the form of a huge hand that grabbed the nascent divinity.

As the explosive force of Bai Xiaochun's attack was dissipated by that enormous hand, a grating voice echoed out from nowhere.

“Bai. Xiao. CHUN!!!” Each of the characters that made up his name was uttered in a voice that crackled like heavenly thunder. The words exploded into the minds of everyone present as a gigantic figure appeared up above.

It was the demigod patriarch, who held the listless and dispirited Lightning Ancestor in his hand. The demigod drove away the will of the heavens in the area, ensuring that he was the only paramount entity in all creation!

When Bai Xiaochun heard his words, and felt the pressure weighing down on the area, his previous brazenness and momentum vanished, to be replaced with profound nervousness.

“The old monkey turned out to be useless!” he wailed inwardly. “Couldn't he have stretched things out for a bit longer? I was just about to get away.... Now I'm really in for it. What do I do...?”

As Bai Xiaochun hovered there nervously, Master Cloud Lightning double checked that his other self's nascent divinity was safe, and then clasped hands and bowed deeply to the demigod patriarch.

The other northern devas all breathed sighs of relief. Bai

Xiaochun really had been putting on too dramatic of a display of strength, leaving them completely shaken. As they clasped hands in greeting, the bedraggled Feng Chen emerged from the crystal coffin to also excitedly offer greetings.

Scowling on the verge of tears, Bai Xiaochun began to edge backward, scrambling to come up with a way to resolve the situation. Meanwhile, the demigod patriarch, while unable to suppress his rage, was also feeling a major headache coming on. The truth was that he was relatively helpless in this situation.

There was basically nothing he could do about Bai Xiaochun, not because of Du Lingfei, but because of the Celestial!

There was evidence that the demigod could detect on Bai Xiaochun that Bai Xiaochun himself could not. Based on the conclusions that evidence pointed to, and on certain other matters that the demigod patriarch was aware of, he had an inkling that the Celestial had something important planned for him.

Because of those speculations, he knew that he couldn't do anything too harmful to Bai Xiaochun. Furthermore, he now knew that locking him up wouldn't do any good. After all, he had already destroyed Lightning Penitentiary, and very nearly freed the Lightning Ancestor.

The patriarch didn't dare to incarcerate him, and had finally woken up to the truth of matters. At long last, he realized that Bai Xiaochun could cause disasters without any warning. Therefore, the best thing to do was keep him at a distance....

“Dammit. How did I ever agree to keep this damned disaster confined in the sect!? He's like an unstable lightning bolt just sitting in your pocket, ready to explode without warning!” In the end, he sighed. Never before in his life had he ever met anyone who could be as frustrating as Bai Xiaochun.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was feeling profoundly nervous. His heart pounded as he tried to think of some way to get out of

trouble, and yet, he couldn't. Finally, he braced himself, looked up at the demigod, and hesitantly said, "Hey there, Eldest Brother demigod, um... would you like to attend me and Feifei's wedding...?"

Despite Bai Xiaochun's nervousness, he had to marvel at his own quick-wittedness. After all, his one simple sentence actually emphasized three important matters.

First, that he had an intimate relationship with Du Lingfei... and that they would likely marry in the future.

Second, that the Celestial would become his father-in-law....

Third, that he hoped to calm the situation down....

It didn't matter whether the demigod would actually pick up on all three. As far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned, it was really an amazing play on his part.

In response to his words, the demigod patriarch slowly looked up and fixed his gaze dead on Bai Xiaochun. Waving his hand, he spoke in a very irritated voice.

"If I ever see you in the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect again, then it won't matter if you're the Celestial's son-in-law. I'll skin you alive! Now screw off!" His words exploded like thunder, especially the last two. Heaven and earth shook violently as a massive force wrapped Bai Xiaochun up, ripped him up into the air, and then hurled him out of the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect.

A miserable shrieked echoed out as he flew through the air off into the distance....

The northern cultivators were a bit let down, but at the same time, were all breathing sighs of relief. They hated Bai Xiaochun, and yet feared him, Master Cloud Lightning included. In addition to the bitterness that most of them felt, the majority regretted that any limitations or torments had been placed on Bai Xiaochun, he

who should never, ever, ever, ever, ever be limited or tormented.

“He is truly the epitome of a walking disaster. His most powerful divine ability is his ability to cause disasters! We were real fools back at the beginning.... A guy like that should never be allowed to stay inside the sect!” Master Cloud Lightning chuckled bitterly and sighed endlessly, but at the same time, was profoundly shaken by Bai Xiaochun’s battle prowess.

Furthermore, when it came to the Cloud Lightning Forefather technique, the fact that the demigod patriarch had the Lightning Ancestor in his custody suddenly caused Master Cloud Lightning to realize what had happened.

Although the Lightning Ancestor was in bad shape, he wasn’t unconscious, and the twisted smile on his face revealed the truth. Clearly, he was very pleased at all of the chaos which had been caused in the sect.

“So, that kid’s name is Bai Xiaochun?” the Lightning Ancestor said. “Not bad. Not bad at all. He’s definitely going to go places in this world!” He chuckled loudly.

The demigod patriarch ignored the Lightning Ancestor, and instead turned toward the devas.

“You, a group of powerful, majestic devas, all joined forces against Bai Xiaochun, and ended up in this miserable state. Useless fools!” After cursing the devas a bit more, he turned grimly and dragged the Lightning Ancestor with him back to his crystal coffin.

The devas accepted the criticism in bitter silence. Afterward, they exchanged awkward, helpless glances.

“Ah, whatever. At least he was kicked out....”

“This Bai Xiaochun is a legend.... I’ve never seen anything like him. Even when locked up in prison, he still managed a cultivation base breakthrough....”

“I don’t ever want to see him again as long as I live!! And you

know what, the rest of you had best never even mention his name around me!!"

The devas weren't the only ones to react like that. The disciples from the Cloud Order and Lightning Order were all sighing deeply, and thinking back to how they never should have tried to keep Bai Xiaochun suppressed. Back then, they had chuckled proudly at how the supposed dragon that was Bai Xiaochun had become nothing more than a worm after arriving in the north.

But now... Bai Xiaochun had used his actions to deliver a message loud and clear to the northerners. Maybe he was a worm... but he could still poke the north full of holes. In the end, everyone was basically thinking the same thing....

"That walking disaster had better not ever come back here...."

As the northerners were sighing in exhaustion because of Bai Xiaochun, he was flying through the air off into the distance, almost like a meteor. Eventually, he landed, smashing into the icy plain far away from the sect.

The ice shivered, and his landing made a huge crater, which he eventually crawled out of, his hair disheveled, his robes in tatters.

Scowling in indignation, he turned to look back in the direction of the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect. Finally, he sighed.

"If you wanted me to leave, you could have just said so. Why the hell did you have to seal my cultivation base and throw me through the air...?" From what he could tell, these northerners were all completely unreasonable, and scoundrels through and through. They were essentially villains, especially the demigod patriarch. He was the worst of all.

"Ah, whatever. If they don't want me there, then that's fine. Besides, if they hadn't restricted me in the first place, I would have left a long time ago." Sighing again, he reviewed everything he had accomplished in the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect, and

actually felt quite proud of himself.

“Hmmmphh! They sure know how awesome I am now, don’t they?! How dare they limit Bai Xiaochun with a five-point covenant!” He took a deep breath of icy air, feeling very excited to, at long last, be free of any restrictions. It was a wonderfully relaxing feeling.

“Well, nobody’s here to tell me what to do. I guess I can plant my moonflower again, right?” After all, the ice leaf he was working on was only about half-finished. After looking around, he found a nice place to hew out a temporary immortal's cave. He spent a few minutes organizing it a bit, then took out his moonflower seed and then dug a hole in the ground.

“Moonflower, baby, nobody’s here to tell us what to do now. Hurry up and grow as fast as you can!” Face glowing with anticipation, he dropped the moonflower seed into the hole.

Chapter 972: Deja Vu

There were no restrictions in place, and thus, no need to be cautious. This was the moonflower's third chance to grow, and it held nothing back. In a short three days, it grew more than it had in a month back in the Cloud Order.

Most of the immortal's cave that Bai Xiaochun had created was now filled with moonflower branches. As for the main stalk of the flower itself, it was already over a dozen meters tall.

Were it not for the fact that Bai Xiaochun had started to feel cramped, and voiced his dissatisfaction by clearing his throat, the moonflower would have taken over the whole cave. However, after sensing his irritation, it had left an area aside for his use.

Eventually, the moonflower began to spread out on the icy plain, until it filled the entire 5-kilometer area....

Bai Xiaochun had grafted the ice leaf onto the flower from the very beginning.

Back in the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect, there had been too many people keeping a close eye on him. Coupled with the five-point covenant, he had been too nervous to do any cultivation. But now, he was making slow progress with his Undying Blood.

Since he finally had an opportunity to practice cultivation away from any prying eyes, he pulled out the two skeletons he had in his bag of holding.... These were the skeletons that he had taken from deck 2 of Ghostmother's ship, the ones which were partially fused at the skull!

Back when he had first touched the skeletons, he had sensed a powerful life force within the skulls that caused his Undying Blood to surge.

Unfortunately, there had been no time to do anything with them. But now that he had a chance to study the gold and crystal skulls

together up close, he began to reach certain conclusions.

“I’m working on my Undying Blood, which means that I’ve almost finished cultivating the Undying Codex.... Unfortunately, I never found any information about the Live Forever Codex. These skeletons are the only clue I’ve ever come across.” With that, he reached out and placed his hands onto the two skeletons.

The instant he did, a powerful life force rushed into him.

He shivered. This life force was very different from the type he had acquired through medicinal pills that were concocted from plants and vegetation. The life force from the skeletons was perfectly suited for his Undying Blood, and in fact, didn’t need to be refined at all. It immediately caused drop after drop of blood inside of him to be converted to Undying Blood.

It only took a few breaths’ worth of time for the first drop to form, and then another.

“So fast....” he murmured, eyes shining with excitement. Now that he was in the mid Deva Realm, his battle prowess had shot to a much higher level. And yet, it would only get stronger if he upgraded his Undying Blood.

An entire month went by in which he was completely focused on cultivation.

During that time, no one bothered him. He spent all of his time absorbing life force from the skeletons, and building up more and more Undying Blood....

Soon, he had converted twenty percent of his total blood supply into Undying Blood!

And it kept going!

There seemed to be no end to the supply of life force in the skeletons. To Bai Xiaochun, it felt just like when he had been cultivating the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation in Lightning Penitentiary.

“Don't tell me that these two skeletons will push my Undying Blood all the way to completion!?!?” The mere thought had him itching with excitement, and so focused was he on cultivation, that he didn't even spare a moment to check on the moonflower.

During the past month of wild, unchecked growth, the moonflower plant had expanded in shocking fashion. It was now several dozen meters tall, and extremely conspicuous in its location on the plain.

In fact, there were many locations on the ice in which little moonflowers were now visible.... The plain itself seemed to be shrinking, with moonflower roots filling an area hundreds of kilometers across.

The moonflowers seemed to pulse with life, causing countless wild beasts that inhabited the plains to flee in terror.

As the plant grew, absorbing more and more frigid qi, it never forgot what Bai Xiaochun had asked it to do. It continued to send the frigid qi into the leaf, which grew more and more complete.

Another entire month went by, during which Bai Xiaochun remained just as focused on cultivation. Only by this point did the life force within the two skeletons show signs of drying up. After he finally absorbed it all, he opened his eyes.

He almost immediately noticed the differences within himself. Although he looked the same, he now had a shockingly abundant life force within him. He could also sense that his powers of regeneration had improved. He even pulled out a sword and cut himself as a test.

The wound immediately closed... and a moment later, no sign of the injury could be seen.

“The Undying Blood's greatest power has to do with regeneration....” Gasping, he cast his senses inside to check his blood, and soon found that in his two months of absorbing the life

force from the skeletons... forty percent of his blood had become Undying Blood!!

“So fast!!” Almost unable to believe that it was true, he did some more checking, and then finally began to laugh loudly.

The two skeletons were now much darker than before. “But, I might still be able to use them.”

He put them away, musing about what good fortune they had turned out to be.

He rose to his feet and shook out his arms and legs, then sent his divine sense out to check on the moonflower.

Almost instantly, his eyes went wide. The once icy plain was now covered with dark soil... and was more than half filled by moonflower roots!

Although it didn't count for much when compared to the north as a whole, Bai Xiaochun was still shocked by how much it had grown.

The plain was now covered with moonflowers.... Furthermore, the sky was also filled with the flowers, which had grown together to make a larger form that looked like a crescent moon.

In the very middle of that crescent moon was a huge flower.

After staring in shock for a moment, he murmured, “Moonflower, baby, is that you...?”

There was a crystalline leaf on the huge flower which was particularly eye-catching. In response to Bai Xiaochun's question, the flower shivered, sending the ice leaf floating down toward him.

Even as the leaf settled onto his palm, the moonflower's mind reached out and spoke to him. Not with words, but with thoughts alone. It was both thankful, and said that it would miss him....

It couldn't grow any further on this ice plain, and hoped that Bai Xiaochun would agree to let it move on to another ice plain to grow

even more.

Considering how many little animals Bai Xiaochun had fed medicinal pills to in the past, it was no surprise to him that the flower had become intelligent to a certain degree.

After all, it was a very mysterious flower that came from beyond the heavens.

In terms of the flower's request to go out on its own, Bai Xiaochun was initially hesitant, but in the end, agreed. However, he gave the flower strict instructions not to harm any people.

When the moonflower received his answer, it shivered in excitement. Then, Bai Xiaochun watched as the enormous flower shriveled up into a multitude of dandelion-like seeds that floated out of the plain and headed in random directions.

For some reason, the sight of the innumerable dandelion-like seeds filling the sky seemed very familiar, although he couldn't quite remember when he had seen anything else like it....

It was almost as if, somewhere deep in his soul... there was some sort of eternal memory that would always be a part of him....

"Maybe I saw something like this when I was a kid?" He shook his head as the seeds drifted off into the distance. A moment later, a bright beam of light appeared, within which was a young woman. Du Lingfei had returned....

Chapter 973: An Answer

At first, Bai Xiaochun was shocked, but a moment later, a smile split his face.

“Boo!”

Even from a distance, Du Lingfei could see that Bai Xiaochun was not injured, and in fact, was jumping up and down in lively fashion. Looking as though she were slightly annoyed by something, she flew down to him.

“Xiaochun, I can’t believe what you did in the Nine Heavens--”

“Stop, boo. Stop right there. Let’s just enjoy the happiness of finally being reunited! Don’t even bring up those bastards in the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect. You have no idea how horrible those people are!” With that, he went on to give a very detailed account of the humiliation he had endured in the sect.

Du Lingfei sighed. She had originally intended to talk with him about what had occurred, but in the end, she just listened.

Actually, Du Lingfei had been out on the mission for her father the entire time, and had only returned to the sect a few days before to check on Bai Xiaochun.

When she arrived, she almost couldn’t believe the situation, and that was even considering how much she knew about Bai Xiaochun and his affinity for causing disasters.

Furthermore, the disciples in the sect had all given her very strange looks. Therefore, she had gone out to try to find Bai Xiaochun, only to discover that he wasn’t returning any of her messages.

Eventually, she noticed that one of the ice plains was melting, a curious scene which led her to suspect that Bai Xiaochun might be involved.

And that was what had led to their reunion.

Seeing how worked up Bai Xiaochun was getting, Du Lingfei sighed and said, "Alright, alright. I won't bring it up again. Happy?"

Then she stepped up to him and began to smooth out his disheveled hair and robes. "I'm almost done with the tasks at hand, but I still have a few things left to do.... You can't just sit around here, why don't you come along?"

She was so close that he instantly caught a whiff of her perfume, causing him to blink a few times in a row. Her skin was as fair as freshly fallen snow, and to have her beautiful face so close to him caused his heart to start beating a bit more rapidly. Although he actually did like the idea of tagging along with her, he also knew that for a true, manly man like himself to be following a woman around wasn't really proper, unless he was her bodyguard or something similar. Another acceptable reason would be if she asked him several times.

Sticking his chin up, he said, "I'm doing fine right here. You just go take care of your business."

Covering her smile, she looked him up and down. Then she took a step closer and rested her hand on his shoulder.

"Xiaochun, I'm really very lonely on my own. Come along! Why not?"

Bai Xiaochun was both very pleased and also quite enjoyed hearing her talk to him like this. However, he maintained his aloof expression.

"I'll think about it."

Keeping the smile on her face, she lowered her voice a bit and said, "Considering how much that Feng Chen from the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect is scared of you, as long as I have you around, then he definitely won't come bothering me. What do

you say, Xiaochun?”

“Well, you got that right!” he replied, feeling even prouder of himself than ever. “If that Feng fellow dares to appear in my presence, I’ll beat him to death! He’s already lost his fleshly body, and exists only as a divine soul. If Master Cloud Lightning and the other devas hadn’t stopped me, I would already have killed him!” With that, he laughed heartily. “Ah, whatever. Since you put it that way, I guess I might as well join you. That will be the easiest way to keep you safe.”

At this point, Du Lingfei couldn’t hold back any longer, and started laughing. “Of course, of course. My Xiaochun is the most awesome of all. He dared to call the Celestial his father-in-law right to his face....”

Bai Xiaochun suddenly felt a bit awkward.

“Well if you want to be my bodyguard,” she said, casting a seductive glance at him as she turned, “then you’d better keep up....” That got Bai Xiaochun’s heart beating even faster. He had always assumed that Song Junwan was the greatest vixen of all, but as it turned out, the seemingly-upstanding Du Lingfei was actually even worse.

“Get back here, you demoness!” he said loudly, hurrying after her.

Laughter rang out across the ice plains as the two of them made their way off into the distance.

It was almost as if they were back in the Spirit Stream Sect.... Above them stretched an azure sky, and around them, endless fields of ice. They were the only living beings visible as they traveled along in that world of silver whiteness.

Occasionally they would laugh, and occasionally they would lower their voices as they spoke of serious matters. They talked about their experiences and their stories. Eventually, that sense of

distance that Bai Xiaochun had felt was gone.

Du Lingfei was once again the same boo that he remembered from years ago....

A month later, when they were in the depths of the ice plains, Bai Xiaochun couldn't hold back from asking a question that had been on his mind for a long time.

"Boo, what is this mission that dad sent you on?" From the direct way he asked the question, he didn't seem to feel that it was an inappropriate topic at all.

"You know," Du Lingfei said with an enigmatic smile, "I'd really like to see you address him that way the next time you see him in person."

Bai Xiaochun laughed dryly. He very much wanted to thump himself on the chest and declare that he absolutely would dare to do exactly that. However, whenever he thought about that blood-hair that he had absorbed, he couldn't help but feel guilty and nervous. Clearing his throat, he once again asked about what Du Lingfei was doing in the north.

Du Lingfei was hesitant to answer the question. Her mission was top secret, and the details were not to be discussed. However, Bai Xiaochun's curious expression got the better of her.

"I'll tell you, but you have to promise not to tell anyone else...." Lowering her voice, she continued, "My father sent me here to investigate... some things connected to my Eldest Sister...."

"You have an Eldest Sister?" Bai Xiaochun said, sounding surprised. Of course, he immediately thought back to the baby girl.

"You see," Du Lingfei said, "The Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect wasn't always the riversource sect here in the north. There used to be another sect called the Frigid School! The demigod matriarch of the Frigid School... was my father's top apprentice. That's why I call her Eldest Sister.

“The Frigid Matriarch betrayed my father, and committed some heinous crimes. Because of their Master-apprentice relationship, my father intended to capture her, not kill her. However, she turned out to be the epitome of malevolence, and continued to plot against him. In the end, it was to his great bitterness that he realized he had to kill her....” Of course, these were things that Du Lingfei had only heard about, not witnessed personally.

“However, my Eldest Sister was a person of spectacular talent and ability. Years later, my father began to suspect that something peculiar had occurred. Therefore, he sent me here, to where the Frigid School had once existed, to perform a thorough investigation.... He wants to know whether or not that Eldest Sister really did die!

“The truth is that I’ve been investigating this matter for many years now.... In fact, that’s why I was in the Spirit Stream Sect. The Spirit Stream Sect... was originally founded by the surviving disciples of the Frigid School, who escaped to the east to start a new sect.” She looked over at Bai Xiaochun, who was secretly shaken to the core that she was here in the north because of the baby girl!

Also, he now understood why the daughter of the mighty Celestial had been in the Spirit Stream Sect!

“But what were you doing in the trial by fire for blood master in the Blood Stream Sect?” Looking over, he asked another question that had been burning in his heart for a very long time.

Du Lingfei took her time to respond.

“Because... the Blood Stream Sect’s Blood Ancestor was... the Daoist partner of my Eldest Sister! If my speculations are correct, the Blood Ancestor died, but my Eldest Sister didn’t. And most likely, she would want to accompany her husband after his death....”

Her words struck Bai Xiaochun’s mind like countless bolts of

lightning. All of a sudden, so many things were made clear.

Why had the Celestial left the Blood Ancestor in place for so many years?!

Why had the spell formation protecting the baby girl in the depths of the Spirit Stream Sect been weakened after Du Lingfei left the sect?!

He now knew the answers to those questions.

However, there was still one big question that he didn't know the answer to, and didn't dare to ask right now.... Why had the Celestial sent his daughter to investigate these matters, instead of doing it himself?

Considering the shocking level of the Celestial's own cultivation base, he could easily turn the world upside down to get the information he wanted!

Furthermore... was the Celestial truly unaware of the existence of that baby girl....

Chapter 974: Drastic Occurrences

Secrets. Everyone has secrets. Whether a person is a brother, sister, friend, lover, or even a parent... everyone has secrets that they wish to keep from others.

Secrets are one thing, but when those secrets turn deadly, they can cause even two people with the closest of relationships to drift apart.

That was what had occurred between Du Lingfei and Bai Xiaochun.

He had his secrets regarding the Spirit Stream Sect, the baby girl, and the world treasure of the north.... All of them were things that he definitely couldn't talk about.

Du Lingfei could see that there were things he wanted to keep to himself, and she didn't press him. And thus, they proceeded along silently for a while. Eventually, Du Lingfei said something seemingly completely out of the blue.

"In the past, I used to tell my father everything. But after the Spirit Stream Sect, I stopped doing that. When it comes to observations or speculations, I tell him some things, and keep other things to myself."

Bai Xiaochun suddenly looked over at her. The meaning behind her words was clear; she wouldn't tell the Celestial all of the details about matters between the two of them.

After another protracted silence, Du Lingfei lowered her voice again and said, "My father... has changed in recent years."

Bai Xiaochun's mood had sunk deeply. The closeness he had felt with Du Lingfei earlier was now changing, and it was in complete silence that they continued on their way through the ice plains.

He wasn't sure exactly where they were headed, and didn't know if Du Lingfei even had a destination in mind.

At a certain point, the wind picked up, and it started snowing. It began to grow dark, and eventually, the entire sky was filled with snow.

It fell on his clothing and hair, and also into the footsteps he left behind him as he walked, until they were covered, making it seem as if he hadn't even passed by....

The snowfall grew heavier, and the wind louder, until it seemed like the shrieking of countless evil ghosts. It was starting to get unsettling.

After some hesitation, Bai Xiaochun turned to Du Lingfei, and when he saw the snow that had built up on her hair and shoulders, said, "Why don't we find a place to--"

However, before he could finish speaking, his expression flickered as a profound sensation of deadly crisis rose up in him, causing his hair to stand on end. Without a moment of hesitation, he grabbed Du Lingfei in his arms and pulled her backward.

Du Lingfei gasped, allowing Bai Xiaochun to fly backward with her, and simultaneously performing a double-handed incantation gesture. Then she reached up with her right index finger and touched her forehead.

In that moment, a shadowy figure appeared within the snow in the spot she had just occupied. It was almost as if the thing had teleported into place, and along with it came an explosively deadly aura.

As soon as the shadowy figure appeared, it shot forward in a blast of wind toward Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei.

Of course, all of this takes some time to describe, but happened as quickly as light bouncing off of a mirror. As the shadowy figure pounced, Du Lingfei's finger touched her forehead, and a golden blast of light shot out to envelop both her and Bai Xiaochun. Then they vanished, to reappear a moment later, 300 meters away.

Seemingly furious, the shadowy figure let out a piercing cry as it spun and shot toward them again. By now, Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei were able to see clearly what they were facing, despite all of the snow blowing in the air!

The shadowy figure... was a ball of black smoke, in the middle of which was a face that appeared to be laughing, but not, crying, but not. It possessed a shocking ghost qi as it shrieked and again tried to pounce on the two of them!

As soon as Bai Xiaochun saw that face, his mind spun, and he cried, “Y-you.... It’s you!!”

This ghost face... had once been part of the Three Ghost Flags on Ghostmother’s bone galleon. He had intentionally allowed himself to be grabbed by the Celestial so that he would be separated from the ghost galleon and remain in the Heavenspan Realm!

The Celestial had chased after him, but the laughing-crying ghost face had used an unknown divine ability to vanish into thin air.

And now, here he was, radiating a murderous aura as he tried to kill Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei!

“What is he doing here!?” Bai Xiaochun thought. There was no time for thinking or planning. The laughing-crying ghost face closed in, staining the snow black with its ghost qi, and transforming it into countless blades that shot forth in attack.

Letting out a shout, Bai Xiaochun unleashed the fifth of the Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations, bolstered by the Living Mountain Incantation. Moonlight spilled out of his left eye as his left hand utilized the Waterswamp Kingdom, and his right hand punched out with an Undying Emperor’s Fist.

He was leading... with his strongest state, and two of his biggest trump cards!!

He felt a huge amount of pressure from this ghost face, which surpassed the Deva Realm by far. In fact, he wasn’t even sure

exactly how strong the ghost face was!

As Bai Xiaochun made his move, Du Lingfei took a breath and performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing more golden light to erupt out from her, which took the form of a golden phoenix. Golden flames erupted off of the phoenix as it soared over the ice plain to meet the ghost face.

Upon seeing Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei joining forces to fight it, the ghost face cackled as though all of this were some hilarious joke. Then, he suddenly twisted and distorted, transforming into a clawed hand!

It was pitch black, with razor-sharp claws that sliced the air open as it slashed forward!

The clawed hand hit the Waterswamp Kingdom first, causing a deafening boom to fill the air. As for the clawed hand summoned by the Waterswamp Kingdom, it was instantly destroyed!

A defiant howl echoed out, and Bai Xiaochun shuddered violently, coughing up a mouthful of blood. That was when Du Lingfei's golden phoenix hit the ghost claw.

The fiery, golden phoenix was also destroyed almost effortlessly, and emitted a miserable shriek as it faded away from existence. Du Lingfei also coughed up blood, and three gaping wounds appeared on her shoulder that cut all the way down to the bone!

That was when Bai Xiaochun's right hand, powered by the Forefather Transformation and the Living Mountain Incantation, landed an Undying Emperor's Fist!

Heaven and earth shook violently as Bai Xiaochun's Forefather Transformation vanished, and his Living Mountain Incantation form was destroyed. Blood sprayed out of his mouth as his Undying Emperor's Fist was summarily vanquished!

He and Du Lingfei acting in unison could unleash incredible power, and yet that ghost hand destroyed all of their divine

abilities, and barely paused in the process.

However, that slight pause was all the time Du Lingfei needed to perform another incantation gesture. Golden light swept out, covering both her and the bleeding Bai Xiaochun, and then whisking them away.

This time, they appeared 3,000 meters away. However, Du Lingfei didn't hesitate to unleash yet another divine ability, causing flickering light to spread out which took them 30,000 meters away. And then, more light glittered as they vanished again.

It all happened in the blink of an eye. A moment later, the clawed ghost hand once again transformed into a laughing-crying ghost face, his eyes shining with both scorn and avarice.

"You can't escape...." the ghost face said, his voice like a combination of countless other voices. Smiling crookedly, he began to speed through the air, following the auras of Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei, which he could sense as surely as a torch on a dark night.

Off in the distance, Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei were wrapped up by golden light as Du Lingfei used her secret magic over and over again to teleport away.

"What is that thing doing here!?!?" Wracked with anxiety and unease, Bai Xiaochun took out some medicinal pills for both himself and Du Lingfei. As for him, his Undying Blood was already at work, ensuring that his fleshly body power was already almost completely back to normal.

Even still, it was clear that he was absolutely no match for that ghost face, who was clearly far beyond the level of a deva!!

After all, he and Du Lingfei working together would be virtually invincible to anything under the level of a demigod!

"I think I might know why he's here," Du Lingfei said. "I'm

guessing... that my father is coming.” A cold gleam passed through her eyes, and yet, when she said the word ‘father’, she shivered as though in pain.

Chapter 975: He's Already Here

In response to Du Lingfei's words, Bai Xiaochun's eyes glittered with surprise. Something seemed very odd with how she felt about the matter. When a daughter was in trouble, it was the most natural of things for her father to come help her, at least as far as Bai Xiaochun was concerned. However, he didn't say anything. As his body continued to recover, he grabbed her arm and pulled her along.

Adding the Undying Hex in gave them a bit more speed. When combined with the golden light of teleportation that Du Lingfei used, it gave them enough speed to at least flee from the laughing-crying ghost face, who was capable of speeds similar to the Celestial himself.

Unfortunately, despite being able to achieve speeds that surpassed the Deva Realm, they were still roughly comparable to a demigod, therefore, the ghost face continued to close in no matter what they did. Soon, they heard the sound of screaming winds behind them, as well as the shrieks of evil ghosts.

Du Lingfei was in worse shape than she was letting on. When her golden flame phoenix was ripped apart by the clawed ghost hand earlier, she had received three shocking wounds. Although she was able to suppress the effects to some degree, as soon as the sound of the ghost's voice reached her, the wounds began to leak black smoke.

The smoke itself formed countless ghost heads, who laughed in profoundly sinister nature.

She began to cough up blood, and her face was a sickly ashen color. However, her eyes continued to shine with cold light. She was the daughter of the Celestial, and possessed powerful life-saving magical items, and yet, she knew that this ghost face had come from beyond the heavens on Ghostmother's bone galleon,

and therefore, there was no way she could stand up to him. Her best bet now was to rely on her golden light to flee as quickly as possible.

In terms of both speed and defenses, it would be hard to find someone that was her match in the lands of Heavenspan. Not even a demigod would be able to harm her in any short amount of time.

Unfortunately, she wasn't dealing with a demigod, she was dealing with... a ghost face from beyond the heavens, someone roughly as powerful as her father, the Celestial!

Bai Xiaochun felt hurt at heart to see blood oozing out of her mouth, and the black smoke rising up from her shoulder. He quickly patted his bag of holding to produce some medicinal pills that could help.

"There's no time for that now," she said through gritted teeth. "We need to get out of here now." With that, she employed another teleportation.

Unfortunately, this teleportation was too much for her to handle. Her injuries worsened, and the black smoke began to pour out in greater volume.

"You're hurt too bad!" Bai Xiaochun said urgently. "Even if we don't have time, we have to do something to treat you!" Without any further explanation, he reached out and ripped her garment a bit, exposing what was now the pitch-black skin of her shoulder, and three deep wounds that exposed white bone in their depths, with rotting and necrotic flesh on the surface.

Another stab of pain hit Bai Xiaochun in the heart, but it was without any hesitation that he made a grasping gesture, which caused all of the rotting flesh to be ripped out of her shoulder, exposing more bone.

Shockingly, her bones were not like those of ordinary people!

Her bones looked like crystal, and emanated an aura that Bai

Xiaochun found to be very familiar, so familiar... that his jaw dropped.

Due to the urgency of the situation, there was no time for thought or planning. He quickly pulled out a medicinal pill, crushed it, and placed the powder into the wound. Then he rotated his cultivation base and began to directly treat her wound.

As the golden light flickered around her, and as Bai Xiaochun offered assistance, her wound began to heal up. Without any hesitation, she performed another teleportation, causing them to reappear further off in the distance.

Once out in the open, they sped onward.

The screaming wind and the howling of the ghost behind them was obviously getting closer, and yet, Bai Xiaochun simply couldn't stop thinking about the sight of the crystal bones from moments ago.

After hesitating for a bit, he finally decided that it didn't matter that they were so focused on fleeing. He simply had to ask the question. "Your... your bones. How come they're crystal...? They weren't like that back in the Spirit Stream Sect, were they?"

Du Lingfei didn't seem surprised by the question. If anyone else had asked it, she would have ignored them, but since it was Bai Xiaochun, she lowered her voice and said, "My father had me cultivate something called the Celestial Incantation, which forms Celestial Bones."

"Celestial Bones...." Bai Xiaochun replied. He was fairly certain that she wasn't deceiving him, and yet, couldn't drive the picture of those crystal bones out of his mind.

Of the two skeletons he had acquired back on the bone galleon... one had golden bones, and the other... had crystal bones, a result of cultivating the Live Forever Codex.

The aura from the crystal bones of the Live Forever Codex was

very similar to Du Lingfei's crystal bones, and yet... was also slightly different.

Bai Xiaochun's thinking was instantly thrown into chaos. And yet, he had no choice but to try to still his mind and focus on helping Du Lingfei to flee.

In some ways, it seemed as if a long time had passed since they began their escape. However, the truth was that only enough time had passed for an incense stick to burn.

Du Lingfei performed another teleportation, after which, they were surrounded by a screaming wind, and the wailing, cackling voice of a ghost.

"You run pretty fast...." It sounded like a host of voices all speaking at the same time, and was spoken in the playful tone of a cat playing with a mouse.

Bai Xiaochun's face fell, and Du Lingfei suddenly spun in another direction. However, before they could do anything else, the sky went dim, and thunderous rumbling echoed out as a huge black ghost hand appeared and shot toward them.

Blood sprayed out of the mouths of both Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei. They managed to avoid the blow directly, but they both felt stabbing pain as they lost connection with their cultivation bases and fell out of the sky.

Even as they landed on the ground, the black smoke that made up the ghost hand began to spread out, filling the entire 3,000-meter area and creating something like a prison, separated from the rest of the world.

Innumerable evil ghosts could be seen weaving in and out of the smoke, snapping at Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei. Thankfully, the golden light surrounding Du Lingfei held strong, although it did ripple and distort under the assault.

From high above in the sky, that 3,000-meter area of black

smoke... looked like a huge ghost face! And Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei... were actually in its mouth!

“What a lovely flavor.... Delicious.... It was definitely worth it to chase you here. Once I digest the two of you, I should be back to my peak level of power.... This golden light is pretty annoying, but in the end, it's just too weak!” Meanwhile, the evil ghosts surrounding Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei continued to rush toward them.

Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei both had shocking battle prowess, but within that 3,000-meter area of black smoke, they simply couldn't stand firm against the countless evil ghosts. Every time they destroyed some with a fist strike, more would take their place.

As for Du Lingfei's golden sphere of light, it was getting very weak, and was even starting to tremble on the verge of collapse.

Once it was gone, it was easy to imagine how the surrounding evil ghosts would pounce on them!

“When is your father getting here!?” Bai Xiaochun asked nervously. It was a deadly moment of crisis, and if the Celestial didn't show up to save them, Bai Xiaochun could only think of one way to get out of it. He would have to use the ice leaf to wake up the baby girl. However, he wasn't even sure if the ice leaf would wake her up right now, and if it did, whether or not she could defeat the ghost face.

“He's already here,” Du Lingfei said quietly.

“What?” Bai Xiaochun replied, a look of shock appearing on his face.

In that very moment, the golden light that surrounded them finally collapsed, and the evil ghosts howled as they prepared to attack. However, before they could, the shattered golden light converged to form a golden lightning bolt.

The golden lightning bolt slashed out into the black smoke,

crushing all of the evil ghosts it encountered as easily as a boulder crushing a drinking glass!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

The black smoke was cut into two parts, which then spilled out in all directions and reformed into the laughing-crying ghost face. The ghost face looked over at the golden lightning bolt, eyes flashing with anger as he yelled, “Celestial!!”

Chapter 976: Father And Daughter

In almost the exact same moment that the ghost face spoke, the golden lightning bolt distorted, and a man walked out, clad in a green robe, an imperial crown on his head.

He seemed threatening without being angry, and had such profound energy that he could be none other than the Celestial!

“You managed to keep yourself hidden for a long time. At long last, I’ve found you!” Smiling excitedly, the Celestial blurred into motion toward the ghost face.

The ghost face let out a piercing cry; he knew that he couldn’t escape this fight, and therefore, he charged directly into battle.

In the shortest of moments, deafening booms were ringing out.

Bai Xiaochun had just barely escaped with his life, and yet, wasn’t happy about that at all. In fact, coldness gripped his heart. He couldn’t stop thinking about how unhappy Du Lingfei seemed at the idea of her father coming, and that was very strange.

Just now... the Celestial had emerged from the golden light surrounding Du Lingfei. Furthermore, she had said that he was “already here.” That in turn seemed to imply that the Celestial had intentionally allowed both of them to be put into extreme danger within that black smoke, all to get the opportunity he sought.

Clearly... he had been after a chance to strike at the ghost face.

And that opportunity... was worth more to him than the safety of his own daughter!

Having reached this point in his train of thought, Bai Xiaochun looked over at Du Lingfei, and could see the bitter disappointment in her eyes.

Much of what Bai Xiaochun knew about the Celestial was only speculation and conjecture. But as the man’s daughter, Du Lingfei

knew him well.

She had originally assumed that her father really had sent her and Bai Xiaochun into the north to find out the truth about whether her Eldest Sister was alive or not.

But now, she realized that the matter of her Eldest Sister had apparently been secondary in importance. The Celestial had thrown both her and Bai Xiaochun out as bait to try to reel in the ghost face from the bone galleon!

Although she couldn't be sure why her father thought that she and Bai Xiaochun would be enough to entice the ghost face, clearly, it had worked.

"Father," she thought, "everything you do is to leave this world. But... is it all worth it? Is the mere act of leaving more important than family...?" Du Lingfei felt like her heart was being torn apart as she watched her father fighting the ghost face.

By now, the Celestial's injuries had recovered significantly, and for some unknown reason, the ghost face was not able to get the upper hand. Snorting coldly, the Celestial advanced and said, "It wasn't easy tracking you down. Don't even think about trying to get away!"

The ghost face chuckled coldly. "Using your own flesh and blood to lure me out? You definitely live up to your reputation of being ambitious and ruthless!"

"Yeah? So what?!" Apparently, the Celestial didn't see anything wrong at all with using his daughter the way he had. After all, she was still alive. And the enigmatic ghost face was almost impossible to track down once it went into hiding.

He was absolutely determined to capture him, and so to him, using Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei as bait was well worth it. Not only did he plan to use the ghost face to come to a better understanding of the world beyond, but he also hoped to refine

him into a personal treasure.

Success would give him a boost in battle prowess that might help him force the gravekeeper to open the Worldgate. If not, perhaps the knowledge he gained would allow him to do that on his own.

The truth was that the Celestial had been overcome with despair when the bone galleon left. And the fact that the ghost face had stayed behind of his own initiative gave him one final possibility to succeed before resorting to the final method that he wished to avoid!

The Celestial and the laughing-crying ghost face rose higher and higher into the sky as they fought, and also began to move off into the distance, until they weren't even visible.

At that point, the screaming wind that battered the ice plain finally died down, and everything went calm.

However, Bai Xiaochun simply could not calm his heart and mind. And unfortunately, he didn't know how to comfort Du Lingfei. Sighing, he walked over, slowly wrapped his arms around her and picked her up.

She went stiff at first, but as she felt the warmth of his arms and chest, she slowly sagged into his arms, as if from exhaustion.

"He was never like this before...." she murmured. All of a sudden, she seemed profoundly weak, causing Bai Xiaochun to sigh.

After a while, she seemed to pull herself together. Looking up at him, she softly said, "What do you think, Xiaochun? Is it really that important to leave this world?"

"I don't really know...." he said, shaking his head. "But I do know that if it were me, I wouldn't want to leave. I like the lands of Heavenspan, and I even like the Wildlands. Why the hell would I want to leave?" He spoke the truth from the bottom of his heart. The Celestial made it seem like the lands of Heavenspan were a

prison that he couldn't wait to escape from, an attitude that Bai Xiaochun just couldn't understand.

As far as he was concerned, as long as he had enough longevity, and had his friends and family with him, then the lands of Heavenspan were wonderful.... Furthermore, Ghostmother had made it obvious that the world beyond was a strange and dangerous place.

Why would anyone want to jump headfirst into danger...? Although, to be fair, Bai Xiaochun also felt like the gravekeeper was being a bit unreasonable. If the Celestial wanted to leave, why not just open the Worldgate for him?

Du Lingfei smiled in response to his words, a beautiful smile that seemed to brighten the surrounding darkness of night. As the moonlight fell down onto them, surrounded as they were by ice, it was a lovely scene.

"I don't want to leave here either," she murmured. "I'm the same as you. I just want peace and quiet, and my friends and family. A simple life...."

"Except... I don't even have any friends.... Xiaochun, look at me. After all the years I've lived, I don't have even a single one.... And I don't even know what my own mother looked like...."

Bai Xiaochun didn't say anything in response. Holding her even tighter, he began to walk forward aimlessly through the night.

Eventually the sun rose off in the distance, casting its warm radiance across the lands. Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei had walked the whole night, but now they stopped in place.

All of a sudden, a golden lightning bolt appeared up in the sky, which pierced through the air for a time until it resolved into the form of a man in a green robe.

The Celestial had returned!

He held a ball of black smoke in his hand, which was none other

than the laughing-crying ghost face. It did not struggle, and could not escape. Clearly, his efforts to capture the thing had been a success. The Celestial's expression was grim and unsightly as he scanned the area with divine sense until he located Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei.

It was only after capturing the laughing-crying ghost face that the Celestial realized he wasn't complete. It was only a soulclone!

The true soul was still missing! Clearly the ghost face was a profound schemer, and although he had been somewhat moved by the bait the Celestial had cast out, he had still decided to rely on a secret magic to split off part of himself in the form of a soulclone, just to be safe.

Although the Celestial had successfully captured the soulclone, he had also alerted his enemy, which would make it even more difficult to get the true soul. Furthermore, it was obvious that, for the time being, his opponent would remain in hiding, and would make sure not to leave any clues as to his location.

However, at least he had not come out completely empty-handed. Although the soulclone wasn't a complete soul, it was better than nothing.

With such thoughts on his mind, the Celestial took a deep breath and looked down at Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei. Waving his hand, he sent a medallion flying downward.

Eyes flickering, Bai Xiaochun slowly reached out to grab it.

"Don't think too much into it," the Celestial said. "It's just a command medallion. Now you can go back to the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect and use their teleportation portal to return to the eastern Heavenspan region."

With that, he ignored Bai Xiaochun and turned his gaze to Du Lingfei.

"Let's go, Fei'er," he said softly.

Du Lingfei hesitated for a moment, but didn't refuse. Hugging Bai Xiaochun tightly, she said her goodbyes.

However, Bai Xiaochun refused to simply let her go. Looking up at the Celestial, he gritted his teeth and said, "Celestial, Feifei and I--"

Before he could finish speaking, the Celestial's eyes glittered with cold light, and he interrupted, "I know what you want to say. You want me to leave my daughter here with you. Unfortunately, you don't qualify. We can talk about it when you're a demigod!" With that, he turned and vanished into thin air.

Du Lingfei shook her head and took a deep breath to calm her heart. Then she followed the Celestial and vanished into thin air.

Bai Xiaochun stood there for a while, complicated emotions filling him. Once upon a time, he had assumed that as the daughter of the Celestial, Du Lingfei would have a very high standing, and as a result, plenty of happiness.

But after what had just occurred on the icy plains of the north, he realized how bitter her life was, and how coldly the Celestial treated her....

"Demigod, huh...?" he murmured. His eyes suddenly glittered with unswerving determination.

Chapter 977: All Mine!

Back when Bai Xiaochun had first become part of the cultivation world, he had never even heard of demigods, let alone had it as a goal to become one. But now that he was in the mid Deva Realm, he was actually very close to that level.

Furthermore, back in Giant Ghost City in the Wildlands, he had acquired a drop of soul-blood from the Giant Ghost King, which had temporarily allowed him to experience what it was like to be a demigod!

Even more important was how the baby girl had told him that the lands in the north were the foundation of a magical item, and were filled with countless reserves of the spiritual energy of heaven and earth.

Although he couldn't be sure if that good fortune would allow him to achieve a full cultivation base breakthrough, he did know that it would enable him to crush anyone in the Deva Realm!

Furthermore... he might even be able to fight a demigod!

Finally, he took a deep breath and transformed into a bright beam of light that shot over the horizon. A few days later, he found a suitable ice river in which to carve out an immortal's cave, where he sat down cross-legged.

Worried about repercussions from the Celestial, he didn't immediately call out to the baby girl, but instead, decided to wait.

After half a month went by without the Celestial returning, Bai Xiaochun finally started to feel confident. However, he still waited for another three months.

Finally, he couldn't wait any longer. His eyes opened, and he took a deep breath as he pulled the coffin out of his bag of holding. Looking at it hesitantly, he said, "Everything that needs to be said between myself and the Frigid Matriarch... has been said. It won't

do her any good to try to pull a fast one on me!”

Gritting his teeth, he pulled out the ice leaf and placed it gently down onto the surface of the coffin.

The leaf instantly sank down into the coffin, and landed onto the baby girl’s forehead. Dazzling light flashed, and the leaf disappeared.

Even as Bai Xiaochun looked nervously at the coffin, an excited voice that he hadn’t heard in quite some time suddenly spoke into his mind.

“The aura of the north... frigid coldness... the aura of awakening....

“You’ve done well.... When I fully awaken, it will only last for a hundred breaths. I can’t do it now. Follow my directions to the entry node.... Once there, I can wake up fully, and the countdown of 100 breaths will begin. That will be the time to open the entrance to the magical item!”

Bai Xiaochun shivered with apprehension. He had put a lot of thought into this matter over the past months, but since he had made his decision, he rose to his feet and began to follow the baby girl’s directions. He left the immortal's cave, and then began to trek deep into the ice plains of the north.

Before long, he was led to a mighty ice river. After looking around the area briefly, he stomped his foot on the ground, which caused an enormous crevice to open up.

He looked down at the crevice, then flew inside. On occasion, he found barriers of ice blocking his way, which he would simply destroy. After the time it takes an incense stick to burn, he was far beneath the surface of the plain.

He was now in an enormous ice cave that was filled with strong frigid qi. Ice spikes jutted out everywhere, as well as smaller rivers of ice, making the entire place seem very dangerous.

As soon as he was in the cave, he realized that, far below on the ground was a huge lake that looked like a mirror!

The surface of the lake was covered with smooth ice that radiated a feeling of extreme age. Everything was silent as he floated down and landed on the lake, within which he could see his reflection. The entire place seemed profoundly mysterious.

“I'm here.... You know what the consequences will be if you're lying to me, right? I'm not going to fight you for control of the magical item. As long as you don't do anything to hurt me, we'll be fine. But if you have any ill intentions, you're dead! I'm sure you know which is the best choice for you to make!”

At this point, the baby girl's excited voice sounded in his mind. “This is the place! Hurry up and take out the coffin!”

Bai Xiaochun didn't hesitate to do just that. He took out the coffin and gently placed it down onto the surface of the mirror lake.

Almost immediately, the coffin began to shine with bright light, and powerful fluctuations began to roll off of it.

At this point, the baby girl's voice again rang out into his mind.

“Thank you for your help, Bai Xiaochun. Don't worry. You won't regret this. And no, I'm not lying to you!”

“I left this sole entrance node into the magical item years ago. This is the only location to get into the world that exists inside of it!”

“I need 100 breaths of time to open the node. Once it's open, we'll both be sucked into the magical item!”

“After we're inside, I'll need some time to fuse with the magical item and become its spirit automaton.... As for you, feel free to absorb the energy of heaven and earth that has built up inside over the innumerable years which have passed!”

“Trust me. When the two of us come out again...you will not regret your decision!” The baby girl couldn’t suppress the excitement in her voice. As she finished speaking, the coffin began to shine with dazzling light, and at the same time, to melt!

As the coffin melted, Bai Xiaochun could see the baby girl growing larger! In the blink of an eye, she was a beautiful young woman! Then, she began to shine so brightly that it was impossible to see anything of her beyond her outline!

A powerful aura began to radiate out from her which didn’t rise up into the air, but rather, shot down toward the mirror lake.

The lake became water, which started rippling back and forth as the young woman sank down into it.

That caused the ripples to grow more intense, and sent rumbling sounds echoing out in all directions.

Bai Xiaochun’s heart raced as he looked on nervously. One breath of time after another ticked past as the ripples grew more intense, and the young woman sank into the resulting vortex.

The vortex spun slowly at first, but after 20 breaths of time, it was spinning quite rapidly. As the vortex connected with the power of the energy node, a tunnel was forming that led into the magical item!

At 40 breaths of time, the rumbling grew so intense that it was impossible to hear anything else. Many of the ice spikes and ice rivers couldn’t sustain the intense sound, and shattered.

However, Bai Xiaochun wasn’t paying attention to that. All of his attention was focused on the vortex.

50 breaths. 60 breaths. 70 breaths....

Bai Xiaochun’s heart was pounding as the vortex spun with utter madness. By this point, he was fairly certain that he could see something that resembled a cave-like tunnel inside of the vortex!

Beyond that tunnel was... another world!

“30 breaths of time left!” Bai Xiaochun couldn’t help but take a few steps closer. However, even as he did, a familiar voice suddenly echoed out.

It sounded like a screaming wind mixed with laughter and wailing. As soon as Bai Xiaochun heard the voice, his face fell, and he spun to see a shadowy figure blurring into the cave through the crevice above!

“You? Didn’t the Celestial capture you?!?” Bai Xiaochun’s mind began to spin at the possibility that the Celestial might also be present.

“The Celestial!? He only got a soulclone!” This shadowy figure was none other than the laughing-crying ghost face!! The ghost face cackled as he looked down at the vortex, his eyes shining with greed.

Although Bai Xiaochun found the ghost face’s response to be shocking, at least it indicated that the Celestial wasn’t present. Unfortunately, he also knew that he wasn’t even close to being a match for this ghost face, and the fact that he had a greedy gleam in his eyes caused his heart to begin pounding.

“Dammit! How did the Celestial screw up like that? He only got a soulclone?!” Bai Xiaochun immediately began to edge backward.

“So,” the ghost face said loudly, “it turns out there’s a world treasure hidden beneath these ice plains. Hahaha!! The Celestial doesn’t realize it, but you can’t fool me! It turns out that shadowing you was a good choice after all. Sacrificing a soulclone will definitely be worth it if I can sow destiny with a magical item like this. With it... this whole world can be mine!!” Eyes shining with unprecedented brightness, and radiated terrifying cultivation base fluctuations, he advanced!

Chapter 978: Shattered Mirror!

“Dammit, there are still 20 breaths left!” Face pale, Bai Xiaochun backed up nervously. He was very well aware that, even despite being incomplete, the laughing-crying ghost face still had battle prowess equivalent to a demigod, and was something he couldn’t possibly fight against.

As he backed up, the ghost face floated down, eyes gleaming with greed. Ignoring Bai Xiaochun completely, he headed toward the center of the vortex.

“This world treasure is mine!” the ghost face cackled excitedly.

Bai Xiaochun’s eyes had already begun to blaze with anger. Although he couldn’t be exactly sure of what would happen if the baby girl’s efforts were interrupted, even the stupidest person in the world could guess that it would be bad.

“I can't let this happen!” he thought, his eyes turning bloodshot. If the ghost face took control of the magical item, not only would he and the baby girl fail at the last minute, but it was possible he could lose his poor little life. After all, there was no way the ghost face would let him leave to spread word of what had occurred.

There was no time to consider what to do, or to worry about what might happen. Bai Xiaochun howled, immediately resorting to the Forefather Transformation to charge toward the ghost face. He only took three steps, but had already reached the fifth transformation!

His left eye shone with moonlight, providing an explosive increase to his power. Then he added in the Living Mountain Incantation. All of his combined cultivation base and fleshly body power temporarily gave him a level of power that surpassed the late Deva Realm!

Although he wasn’t quite in the great circle, he was very close! A

blast of wind echoed out as he used his Undying Hex to shoot forward and appear directly in front of the ghost face.

“You’re not going anywhere!” he roared in a voice that crackled like heavenly thunder, simultaneously unleashing the Undying Emperor’s Fist!

He didn’t hold anything back. He poured all of his fleshly body power into the blow, forcing the ghost face to turn and look at him. However, a gleam of scorn appeared in the ghost face’s eyes as, instead of retreating, he lunged forward to meet Bai Xiaochun’s Undying Emperor’s Fist.

A massive boom echoed out.

Blood sprayed from Bai Xiaochun’s mouth as he tumbled backward, his Undying Emperor’s Fist routed, his Living Mountain Incantation shattered, and his Forefather Transformation vanquished.

“You think a bit too much of yourself!” the ghost face said with a cold snort. Turning, he headed back toward the center of the vortex. However, thanks to the power of his Undying Blood, Bai Xiaochun’s injuries were already recovering rapidly. As the ghost face continued onward, Bai Xiaochun roared and used his Mountain Shaking Bash to shoot forward.

He performed a double-handed incantation gesture, calling upon his Waterswamp Kingdom. At the same time, he sent frigid qi roiling out, within which appeared numerous frigid projections that lunged at the ghost face.

Worried that it wasn’t enough, he slapped his bag of holding and produced a handful of multi-colored flame, which he also threw out in front of him.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Cracks spread out in the surrounding ice, and the intense heat of the sea of flames that resulted from the detonation of the multi-

colored flame caused much of it to melt. Even the laughing-crying ghost face, who currently had demigod battle prowess, couldn't help but frown.

Normally speaking, the ghost face could deal with these attacks with ease, and could also kill Bai Xiaochun fairly easily. However, he was worried about the fluctuations of the battle attracting attention. Furthermore, he had noticed... that there appeared to be something within the vortex, fusing with the magical item.

He was in no mood to tangle with Bai Xiaochun. What he needed to do was get into the magical item before the fusing process was complete, and make sure that he was the one to fuse with it.

"I'll handle you in a moment!" he said with a cold snort. Then, he unhesitatingly called upon a bizarre curse, uttered in a language that did not originate within the lands of Heavenspan. As he did, the black smoke which surrounded him transformed into nine magical symbols, which swirled through the air toward Bai Xiaochun.

Those nine magical symbols seemed to contain the power of Essence, and although they were weaker than they had been when the ghost face used them in the past, they still shone with dazzling light.

Despite unleashing the nine magical symbols, the ghost face didn't stop for a moment. He continued onward, ignoring Bai Xiaochun's Mountain Shaking Bash, the Waterswamp Kingdom, and the shocking sea of flames. As for the magical symbols, they swirled around him, piercing through all of Bai Xiaochun's divine abilities to appear directly in front of him.

When the magical symbols slammed into him, his chest caved in, and he coughed up gobs upon gobs of blood. It was a grievous injury that caused his vision to swim as he was thrown violently backward.

As Bai Xiaochun was flung away, the greed in the ghost face's

eyes grew more intense, and he closed in on the center of the vortex.

If he entered the vortex, the consequences would be unimaginable. In his madness, Bai Xiaochun opened his Heavenspan Dharma Eye, sending out a beam of light that wrapped around the ghost face.

The ghost face paused for a moment, but regained motion a moment later. He was angry and frustrated, but didn't have time to spare worrying about Bai Xiaochun. He continued forward until half of his head was in the vortex itself. At that point, a voice echoed into Bai Xiaochun's mind.

“There are only a few breaths of time left! Stop him!!”

Eyes bloodshot, Bai Xiaochun shouted, “You're forcing me to do this, ghost face!”

Bai Xiaochun had no options left. He quickly crushed a drop of Undying Blood, causing a towering level of blood qi to surge through him from head to toe. His eyes suddenly looked profoundly evil as he took a step forward, energy pulsing.

He was already beginning to lose control of his consciousness, and act on instinct alone. As the Godkiller was unleashed, he suddenly became voraciously interested in any type of life force.

Before the ghost face could even sense the surging blood qi of the Godkiller, Bai Xiaochun was right in front of him. Bai Xiaochun reached out with his right hand and grabbed onto him viciously.

Instantly, a tremor ran through the ghost face, and a sensation of deep crisis rose up inside of him.

And then, he was ripped out from the vortex!

Howling, the ghost face spun to see Bai Xiaochun pulsing with blood qi. “Dammit, is this... blood magic?!”

The ghost face couldn't have been more shocked by how

dangerous Bai Xiaochun seemed in this moment.

In the moment that the ghost face was hauled out into the open, the baby girl reached the end of the 100 breaths of time. The vortex surged mightily as a powerful gravitational force erupted out, dragging everything in the area toward the opening!

Neither Bai Xiaochun nor the ghost face had any control over their own bodies as they were swept up.

“Maybe I failed on my first attempt, but once I'm inside that magical item, I'll figure out another way to take control!” The ghost face was furious, but at the same time, could see that something was off about Bai Xiaochun.

“This guy's divine soul is weak, making it difficult for him to use that blood magic properly. Otherwise, he would be really difficult to deal with!” The ghost face snorted coldly as he was dragged into the vortex. However, he still managed to send his magical symbols shooting toward Bai Xiaochun again.

“How dare you make things difficult for me. Now that you've lost consciousness and are acting on instinct, it's the perfect time... to seal you!”

Mysterious light shot out from his eyes as the nine magical symbols surrounded Bai Xiaochun, overlapping with each other as they sent out mountain-toppling, sea-draining power. Layer by layer, the power of sealing settled onto Bai Xiaochun.

Even as the sealing marks fell into place, the vortex rumbled with thunderous intensity, and both Bai Xiaochun and the ghost face were dragged inside!

As they were, the lake and the ice cave began to crumble!

Chapter 979: Im Gonna Skin You Alive!

In the depths of the northern Heavenspan River region was an ice plain that was currently collapsing in on itself. The affected area grew deeper and wider, until an enormous ice crater appeared.

It almost looked like a huge fist had punched down onto the ice, creating an eye-catching scar in the landscape.

The trembling of the land was detectable at great distances, ensuring that the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect noticed. Master Cloud Lightning and the other devas investigated it, and even the demigod patriarch came for a personal visit.

However, no amount of searching provided any clues as to what had caused the event. All evidence had been sucked away by that vortex.

“Troubling times....” the patriarch said with a sigh and a shake of his head. Normally speaking, he would have been more focused on digging and digging until he figured out what had occurred. But now he wasn’t in the mood for that.

He turned to look in the direction of Heavenspan Island, and then back in the direction of the Wildlands. Deep in his eyes, the glint of exhaustion could be seen.

The truth was that he was not very happy about the matter of the trial by fire, and the Celestial’s so-called search for an apprentice. In fact, that dissatisfaction was why he had so openly emphasized in front of Du Lingfei that the north was a powerful, autonomous entity.

Of course, even if he were more dissatisfied than he already was, he could never express it openly to the Celestial. However, he knew that he wasn’t the only dissatisfied one.... After the apocalyptic battle in the Wildlands, and the failure of the venture inside the bone galleon, the Celestial only had one choice left.

“It seems the war... will be starting soon,” the patriarch murmured. Sighing, he turned and left.

After the cultivators from the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect left, the area surrounding the crater was very quiet. Snow began to fall again. In the years to come, the falling snow would turn into hard-packed ice, which would slowly build up. Eventually, the crater would be filled in, and although it would always look odd, it would eventually be more a part of the landscape than the gaping wound it was now.

Far, far beneath the surface, in a place that demigods and likely not even the Celestial would notice, was the world treasure. Inside of that treasure existed a unique world.

It was a magical item whose form reflected the north as a whole, with an interior that was only about thirty percent as large as the northern Heavenspan River region itself.

Only the middle region of that interior world was icy like the north. In the east, there was a huge sea that was as clear as the rainwater which occasionally fell out of the sky.

There was no lightning or thunder with that rain, as though it fell out of nowhere for all eternity, constantly filling in a sea which never overflowed....

There was a sea in the west as well, but not a sea of water. It was a sea of raging fire that cast a crimson glow into the sky, a light which was visible from far in the distance. The way the sky burned in unison with the sea below would shock anyone to the core. In terms of size, the eastern sea of rainwater and the western sea of fire were about the same.

The seas to the east and west weren't the only strange things about this world. In the south and north were the thunderclouds and the wind valleys!

In the south, the land itself was dry and parched, not because of

fire, but because of the endless thunderclouds in the sky. The thunderclouds were so thick and numerous that they were almost black, and were filled with endless bolts of lightning. The lightning contained terrifying power that would decimate the ground wherever it landed. It was really a shocking sight, even from a distance.

As for the north, it was filled with numerous intersecting mountain ranges that looked almost like twisting, coiling dragons. The mountains created countless valleys which would fill with explosive wind, thus turning the north into a land of wind valleys.

The screaming wind in the north was loud enough to shake the soul of anyone who heard it, especially when considering the barren landscape. Apparently, any living thing that tried to stand up to that wind would be transformed into rubble.

In sharp contrast to those four other areas was the central region, which seemed much safer and calmer. At the moment, a person could be seen crossing the ice plain. Shivering with cold, he would move along, occasionally looking around to size up his surroundings. He looked very nervous. He was none other than... Bai Xiaochun!

“You tricked me, Frigid Matriarch!!” he growled, scowling on the verge of tears. He had been dragged into this world two days before. Despite being pulled in along with the ghost face, the two of them ended up in completely different areas.

His Godkiller technique had ended as soon as he entered, and he had recovered his senses. Furthermore, the ghost face’s sealing technique had been dispelled. The first thing he did was find a place to hide, after which he began to carefully explore the area. However, after two days, he was already beginning to understand what this world was like, and it left him with a very bad feeling.

“There’s no accumulation of spiritual energy here! You’re a liar, Frigid Matriarch!!” One of the main reasons he had worked so hard

to help the Frigid Matriarch, and to fight the terrifying ghost face, was so that he could use the supposed spiritual energy of heaven and earth in here to further his cultivation.

But now that he was inside, he didn't see even a scrap of energy! Worse, the ghost face was also somewhere inside, and encountering him would make things very difficult. Bai Xiaochun felt like he was already going mad with frustration.

The more he thought about the situation, the worse his mood got. Even stranger was that he couldn't perform any teleportations. Eventually, he threw his head back and howled, "Don't play dead, Frigid Matriarch. Get out and face me!"

In the two days since his arrival, he hadn't heard the voice of the baby girl in his mind even once. She seemed to be completely ignoring him.

That added in anger to his depression. However, he didn't dare to yell too loudly.

"I'm definitely going to tell the gravekeeper about this! And my apprentice! And you know what, I'm going to tell the Celestial too!" Eventually, he simply sighed and proceeded along his way through the ice plain.

The main thing he wanted to do was avoid the laughing-crying ghost face. Unfortunately, despite how large the ice plain was, he was actually lucky to have not encountered him in the first two days. On the third day, even as he proceeded along cautiously, a sensation of imminent crisis caused him to shiver, and then push forward with incredible speed.

Off in the distance was a dense patch of black smoke, which rapidly resolved into the image of an enormous ghost face, which was looking at Bai Xiaochun with a cold smirk. Apparently, it had noticed him much earlier.

"You caused me a big delay, you little punk. I think I'll skin you

alive and turn you into a kite! That'll make me feel a bit better!" With that, the smoke seethed as the ghost face shot toward Bai Xiaochun.

"Senior Ghost Face, you have to listen to me!" Bai Xiaochun shrieked in terror. "I'm a victim here too! That Frigid Matriarch is a total scoundrel! Look, why don't we join forces!?" However, even as his words continued to echo out, the ghost face opened his mouth, revealing a gaping, smoking maw that appeared right above Bai Xiaochun's head.

Bai Xiaochun's scalp was tingling so hard it felt like it might explode. Not having any time to think, he unleashed the power of his cultivation base to fight back when, all of a sudden, he heard the Frigid Matriarch speaking in his ear.

"Don't worry, I'll get you out of there!" All of a sudden, he sensed a teleportation power wrapping around him. Right before the ghost face swallowed him up, rumbling sounds echoed out, along with dazzling light, and he vanished.

When he reappeared, he was 500 kilometers away. Just as he was about to breathe a sigh of relief, another burst of teleportation power rose up, and he began to fade away again.

In the moment before he vanished, the air ripped open, and the ghost face appeared. Seeing that Bai Xiaochun was about to escape, the ghost face howled, "Where do you think you're going?!?!"

The ghost face pursued him madly, and yet, even relying on his own teleportations, he still couldn't catch up.

"Killing that kid isn't that important. I need to get control of this magical item first!" Realizing that he wouldn't be able to catch up to Bai Xiaochun any time soon, the ghost face stopped chasing him, and instead flew up into the sky to try to figure out how to gain control of the magical item!

Chapter 980: Everyone's A Liar

Bai Xiaochun lost track of how many times he was teleported, but he felt like all of his five yin organs and six yang organs were about to be ripped to shreds.

Eventually, he appeared in an ice cave somewhere on the ice plain. Even he wasn't sure exactly where he was.

If it weren't for his powerful fleshly body and the regenerative capabilities of his Undying Blood, he most likely would be dead. In fact, he was so dizzy it took him several breaths of time to recover.

However, despite the fact that he was still a bit angry, some hope had finally appeared.

Worried that the Frigid Matriarch might have heard his dialogue with the ghost face, he decided that it would be best to try to smooth things out. "I thought you had just used me and dumped me, Frigid Crone...."

At this point, the Frigid Matriarch's voice echoed out into his mind yet again. "That old ghost caused some problems with the fusion process.... I'm afraid it's going to take quite a bit of time. I need four or five years at least...."

"Four or five years?" Bai Xiaochun replied, stunned. "Are you kidding me?"

All of a sudden, he got a very bad feeling about where things were going.

"This is no joke," the Frigid Matriarch continued. "I can't reopen the entrance before I finish the process. Therefore, you need to live here for the next few years!"

When Bai Xiaochun heard her explanation, he nearly exploded.

"So, you did screw me over after all!!" he shouted, forgetting about trying to be safe. "There's no spiritual energy at all in this

damn place! How am I supposed to practice cultivation? And what about that ghost? How am I supposed to survive for five years with him around? I want out of here. Now!”

“Technically speaking, there is no spiritual energy,” the Frigid Matriarch said coolly. “But in the east, there is a sea of rain. In the west is the flaming sky. In the south are the thunderclouds. And in the north are the wind valleys. Those areas formed through convergences of spiritual energy. Just go there, and you shouldn’t have any problem absorbing the energy!

“I can’t do anything about that old ghost right now, and I can’t expel him. However, as I gain further control of the magical item, I’ll be able to slowly suppress him and lower his cultivation base!

“Take advantage of the good fortune here, and your cultivation base should progress by leaps and bounds. Just hang in there for a few years, and before long, you’ll be strong enough to deal with him yourself!

“After I completely fuse with the magical item and become its spirit automaton, I’ll need to sleep for a bit of time before fully activating it. Don’t worry, before I sleep, I’ll make sure you can leave. After fully activating the treasure, the north will rise to prominence, and our agreement will be fulfilled!”

Unfortunately, this explanation only made Bai Xiaochun more frantic and nervous. Waving his hand urgently, he said, “Hold on, let me get this straight.... You mean I need to wait four or five years until you become the spirit automaton. Then, you’ll open the entrance and let me out. But afterward, you need to sleep for a bit more time to be able to fully activate the magical item?”

“Exactly.”

After hearing this, Bai Xiaochun felt even more than ever like he was about to go crazy. “Well how come you didn’t explain that beforehand? Why’d you wait until we were inside before telling me?!”

“How was I supposed to know that some old ghost would follow you and sneak inside?! Look, it is what it is. I need a few years to become the spirit automaton, and before then, nobody can leave. You’re on your own now, alright?” With a cold snort, the Frigid Matriarch retracted her consciousness, leaving Bai Xiaochun completely alone.

“Hey, hold on a second!!” he shouted. However, no amount of shouting and yelling got any response. In the end, he tugged at his hair in frustration and bitterness and said, “Liars! Everyone’s a liar! I guess I’m just too pure and simple.”

The idea of being stuck in this place for four or five years filled him with despair. Maybe if the old ghost wasn’t stuck inside along with him, it might have been endurable.

Forget four or five years! Keeping his poor little life safe for four or five months seemed difficult to do, let alone years.

After stewing in frustration for a bit, he realized that he really had no options at hand, and that he would have to just deal with the situation. Finally, he crept out of the ice cave to try to figure out exactly where he was.

Almost as soon as he was out in the open, he heard the crackle of thunder, and could see that, not too far off, endless thunderclouds filled the sky, along with... never-ending lightning.

“Lightning....” he murmured, his eyes flickering with hesitation. He suddenly thought back to the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect, and how the lightning bolts there had increased his cultivation base. However, he had also reached a point where the lightning bolts didn’t aid him, and he had been unable to consume them. At that point, he had nearly been fried to death.

He was torn over what to do, and was trying to decide what decision to make when, all of a sudden, he saw a strand of black smoke a few dozen meters behind him on the ice.

The instant that smoke appeared, it converged into a fist-sized ghost face, which looked over at him.

Bai Xiaochun's eyes went wide, and he lurched into motion with a shriek of anguish.

"Found you at last!" the ghost face said, smiling cruelly. At the moment, more than 10,000 similar wisps of black smoke in other locations on the ice plain all formed into ghost faces that spoke the exact same words.

The more than 10,000 ghost faces rose up into the air and began to speed in the direction of the one that was closest to Bai Xiaochun. It took only a short moment for them to converge and transform into a towering ghost face.

"You're always messing things up for me, you little punk!" the ghost face roared. "I'm not going to give up until I skin you alive!!" With that, it began to pursue Bai Xiaochun. Earlier, after abandoning the chase, he had made an attempt to wrest control of the magical item. Unfortunately, he found that the other divine soul which he had been competing against had been a bit faster, making his own efforts completely useless.

Furthermore, his cultivation base level didn't qualify him to interrupt the process. The only option he could think of was to destroy the entire magical item, but that was something he could only have succeeded at when at his peak level of power.

In his frustration and anger, he decided that he would first kill Bai Xiaochun, and then come up with a way to solve the problem later. After using a secret magic to split into 10,000 parts, he had spread out in all directions... and finally found Bai Xiaochun.

"The first time, the Celestial showed up!" he said angrily. "The second time, I didn't have the attention to spare to kill you! The third time, that damned spirit automaton teleported you away.... You're pretty lucky, punk. But I refuse to believe that on this fourth time, you'll escape into a bunch of lightning that even I'm

fearful of!” Although the ghost face was coming to find that this Bai Xiaochun was relatively hard to kill, he still snorted coldly and shot after him as quickly as possible in the direction of the thunderclouds.

As he closed in, he spit out a burst of black smoke that transformed into a clawed hand that attempted to grab Bai Xiaochun!

Bai Xiaochun's heart was filled with a sensation of deadly crisis. Without any hesitation, he spit a beam of black light out of his mouth, which was the turtle wok. Pushing it out almost like a shield, he used it to defend against the clawed ghost hand.

A boom rang out, and Bai Xiaochun coughed up a mouthful of blood. The force of the blow sent him flying backward, flesh torn and bleeding, cultivation base unstable. However, the fearsome regenerative power of the Undying Blood immediately began to heal him.

In fact, he even borrowed the momentum to shoot forward, simultaneously using his Undying Hex.

“Another treasure?” the ghost face said, shocked by the sudden appearance of the turtle-wok. Then his face lit up with delight.

As for Bai Xiaochun, his eyes were now completely bloodshot. Even defending himself with the turtle-wok had resulted in significant injuries, which made sense considering the vast difference in battle prowess between himself and his opponent.

Given how closely he was being pursued, he realized that he only had one chance... the thundercloud region!

Although the lightning constantly smashed the ground to bits in terrifying fashion, and the horrors of Lightning Penitentiary were still fresh in mind, he had no other options.

“Time to go for broke!!” he roared. Even as the ghost face closed in, Bai Xiaochun... blurred into motion toward the thunderclouds!

The instant he entered the region, a lightning bolt locked onto him and shot down.

Chapter 981: A Bit Of Energy Left

When the lightning bolt struck Bai Xiaochun, he felt an explosive force coursing into his head and then erupting throughout his body.

Sparks of electricity showered off of him in all directions.

It was a terrifying sight that caused him to shriek in terror. But then, he looked around, blinking for a moment before his eyes lit up.

“I’m fine?” Not only was the electricity not hurting him, but it was actually causing his cultivation base to advance.... “I can absorb it!”

This lightning had a different type of life force power than the lightning in Lightning Penitentiary, an energy that caused his Undying Blood to leap as if with joy.

Bai Xiaochun was delighted. Clearly, this lightning existed on a different, higher level than the stuff in the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect. It was much the same way that certain medicinal pills were of higher quality than others, and could help advance one’s cultivation in a different way.

Although he was very happy, the ghost face was right behind him, just about to enter the area of thunderclouds. Therefore, it was without the slightest hesitation that Bai Xiaochun threw his head back and let out a bellow of agony, as if he were experiencing the most horrific torture. The mere sound of it caused the ghost face to shrink back.

“Is the lightning that powerful?” the ghost face wondered. “I feel like allowing him to get struck by lightning is actually letting him off the hook a bit.” The ghost face quickly realized that it was impossible to send his divine sense into the lightning or the thunderclouds. Therefore, he could only wait on the outskirts for

Bai Xiaochun to be killed, then dash in to retrieve his body.

After all, he was very interested in that turtle-wok he'd seen.

As the ghost face waited for Bai Xiaochun to be struck to death by lightning, Bai Xiaochun was still moving forward, being struck over and over again by lightning. Despite how lovely it felt, he continued to emit blood-curdling screams left and right.

After discovering that the cowardly ghost face wasn't going to chase him, he couldn't help but feel a bit of scorn. Apparently, his acting really was doing the job.

"That bastard is too cautious. That won't do. I need to give him something to work with!" With that, he slowed down a bit, and when the next lightning bolt struck, screamed at the top of his lungs and staggered in place, as though he might not be able to continue forward.

The ghost face's eyes flickered. He had been watching Bai Xiaochun closely this entire time, but still had not dared to enter the field of lightning.

When Bai Xiaochun saw his reaction out of the corner of his eye, he gritted his teeth, allowed some more lightning to strike him, and then sagged visibly as he took a shaky step forward.

"He's almost dead!" the ghost face thought with a cold chuckle. However, a moment later, he frowned as Bai Xiaochun, who he assumed would be killed at any moment, took another lurching step forward. Then he took another step as he began to walk off into the distance....

Eventually the ghost face's eyes began to flicker with suspicion. However, it was at that point that more lightning bolts struck Bai Xiaochun, causing him to shudder and then flop over onto the ground, where he lay twitching.

Finally, the ghost face unhesitatingly blurred into motion, shooting through the lightning toward Bai Xiaochun. However,

even as he closed in, Bai Xiaochun struggled to his feet, his eyes bloodshot as if with exhaustion.

“Bring it on!” he shouted hoarsely. “Bai Xiaochun will never give in!!” Then he took another step forward.

The ghost face’s suspicions were dispelled by Bai Xiaochun’s act, and he pushed forward with greater speed. “He’s a tough cookie, that’s for sure!”

However, as he closed in, much of the lightning began to focus on him, and no matter how he dodged back and forth, he couldn’t avoid being hit.

Furthermore, it was to his shock that, despite how powerful he was, the lightning struck him all the way down to his divine soul. Worse, it actually weakened his life force to a certain degree.

“This lightning is very strange!” he thought. He immediately started to get nervous. After all, he was sort of like a tree with no roots; although he had a huge reserve of life force, he had no way to rebuild it once it was used up.

“This isn’t worth it. I’ll just go back, wait until he’s dead, and then come get his corpse!” With that, the ghost face prepared to turn back.

Just as he did, though, Bai Xiaochun let out a trembling scream that was like the tiny burst of flame an oil lamp would emit before winking out. Then, instead of staggering unstably, he lurched forward with a burst of speed, going nearly 3,000 meters in one shot.

That attracted even more lightning than usual, which all struck him at once. Twitching spasmodically, he screamed and toppled over onto his face, where he lay unmoving.

The ghost face stopped in place and looked over. Unfortunately, divine sense didn’t work within the lightning, forcing him to examine the scene with his physical sight only. A moment later,

his eyes shone with determination as he headed in Bai Xiaochun's direction.

Despite how the lightning struck him, he endured, getting closer and closer. When he was only about 3,000 meters away, Bai Xiaochun suddenly let out a muffled cry.

"I refuse to go out like this! I still have a bit of energy left!!" It was as if he were shouting out with the last bit of life he had left in him. Then, to the complete incredulity of the ghost face, he rose shakily to his feet, and then began to trudge forward like the walking dead.

"How come you're not dead!?!?" the ghost face growled angrily. He had been moving fairly quickly, but at the same time, keeping his speed in check. After all, the more quickly one moved in this area, the more lightning one attracted!

But now, in his irritation, he decided to go all out. Just as he was beginning to pick up speed, Bai Xiaochun suddenly began to chuckle bitterly, as if he were about to throw caution to the wind.

"I know what you're after, you old ghost! You want my Heaven-Earth Dao-Polarity Nine-Provinces Wok! But even if I die, I'm going to make you pay the price to get it!!" Cackling madly, he smacked himself on the chest and spat up a huge mouthful of blood to unleash a secret magic. Making it seem like he was burning the last bit of life he had left, he shot forward with a burst of speed, heading directly into a huge convergence of lightning.

In the blink of an eye, he was several tens of thousands of meters away, and being struck by numerous lightning bolts. Finally, he collapsed to the ground, dropping the turtle-wok down next to him.

The ghost face was initially stunned, and his suspicions were starting to grow. After all, the coincidences were really starting to pile up. Now he was faced with a decision: believe, or not believe?

“Maybe he's trying to lure me further in, all in the hopes that I get killed along with him, or at the very least, that I pay a bitter price. Hmph! Well, it's hard to say for sure. And in the end, there's no reason to rush things!” Eyes flickering, he began to back up. Eventually, he was free from the life force-draining lightning, where he turned back to look at Bai Xiaochun.

“If you're dead, then considering the strange properties of this place, I can understand why your corpse would remain there the same as before. But if you're not dead, then I refuse to believe that you can just lay there motionless with that lightning striking you!” Chuckling coldly, the ghost face decided to wait for a whole month.

During that time, Bai Xiaochun didn't so much as twitch. At that point, the ghost face was finally convinced.

“That treasured wok is mine now!” Eyes shining with greed, he entered the lightning for a second time. This time, he didn't hold back at all. He allowed the lightning to strike him constantly as he sped toward Bai Xiaochun.

The area where Bai Xiaochun lay was particularly dense in terms of lightning, striking a bit of fear into the ghost face. However, he ignored his fear, and actually picked up speed.

It was at that point that a voice could be heard that caused the ghost face's mind to spin.

“I refuse to die.... I still have a bit of energy left!!”

Chapter 982: Come And Fight, You Spineless Ghost!

As Bai Xiaochun's weak voice echoed out, he oh-so-slowly struggled to his feet, moving for the first time in an entire month.

Of course, he was feeling more proud of himself than ever. During his month of lying there motionless, the repeated lightning strikes had advanced his cultivation base significantly.

Were it not for the fact that he had long since determined to plot against the ghost face, he would have stood up and started walking around much earlier.

When the ghost face heard Bai Xiaochun talking, he let out a bellow of rage.

“You tricked me!!” he shouted, his mind spinning on the verge of insanity. If he had possessed a fleshly body, he would definitely have been coughing up blood by now. He truly couldn't understand how Bai Xiaochun could lay there for an entire month, and yet not die. Infuriated, he completely ignored the lightning to rush toward Bai Xiaochun.

In the face of the enraged ghost face, Bai Xiaochun began to back up.

“That's right, I tricked you, you old ghost!!” he said proudly. He began to pick up speed, moving even faster than before. Not only did the lightning bolts that struck seem to not hurt him at all, they actually served to bolster his speed.

“You... you....” The ghost face was completely shaken that Bai Xiaochun wasn't harmed at all. However, there was no time at the moment to contemplate why that was. As of this moment, he had made his decision: he would not chase Bai Xiaochun. He would flee!

“Dammit,” he thought, “how can this guy be so uncanny?!?!”

Regret and hatred mingled in the ghost face's heart, rising to an incredible degree. Obviously, he could not tangle with Bai Xiaochun in the thundercloud region. At the moment, he had already slipped down to the demigod level, which meant that going further into the lightning would put him in great danger.

And based on previous encounters, he knew that despite the fact that Bai Xiaochun was only a deva, it would require an all-out effort to kill him.

“Don't even think about running, you old ghost,” Bai Xiaochun hollered. “Come on, let's fight it out to the bitter end!” Of course, he didn't actually approach the ghost face. Instead, he unleashed the power of his Heavenspan Dharma Eye, sending a beam of violet light out to grab him.

The ghost face trembled for a moment, quickly recovering, but unable to avoid the lightning bolts which filled the area. In that brief moment of pause, he was struck by dozens of them.

Despite how powerful he was, that many lightning bolts provoked a miserable shriek before he began to flee in rage. But how could Bai Xiaochun let an opportunity like this pass? The backlash from using his Heavenspan Dharma Eye caused him to cough up blood, but his Undying Blood was already at work. Within moments, he was recovered, and back at work!

The ghost face lurched to a brief halt yet again, and this time, more than a hundred shocking lightning bolts crashed into him. His screams shook heaven and earth, and even caused the sky to go dim.

“I'm gonna kill you! Kill you, you hear?!?! I'll skin you alive! I'll eat your flesh! I'll suck the marrow from your bones!!” The ghost face trembled as his life force was rapidly drained away. Finally, he howled, paying a steep price to break up into ten thousand separate streams of black smoke that fled in all directions.

That finally broke him free of the Heavenspan Dharma Eye.

However, despite being in the form of ten thousand separate streams of black smoke, he still couldn't avoid the destructive lightning. Having no other options, he simply tried to get out of the thundercloud region as quickly as possible!

“Well aren't you fast! Hmph!” Bai Xiaochun wasn't very happy, but had no other tricks up his sleeve at the moment. He could only watch as the more than ten thousand streams of black smoke escaped the thundercloud region, then formed back together into the laughing-crying ghost face.

At this point, Bai Xiaochun came to the conclusion that he finally had the upper hand. Looking at the ghost face off in the distance, his battle spirit surged, and he decided to imitate how the gravekeeper had spoken during the standoff with the Celestial. Pointing directly at the ghost face, he coolly said, “Do you have the guts to come in here, old ghost? Why don't you and I fight a spectacular battle to the death?!”

The laughing-crying ghost face was so angry he was about to explode. However, he didn't have the courage to enter that sea of lightning. In the brief interchange just now, he had lost about ten percent of his total life force!

It had taken countless years to build up that life force, and here it was being drained away in the blink of an eye.

“Shut your damn mouth, Bai Xiaochun. Do you have the guts to come out?!” From the way the ghost face was cursing at Bai Xiaochun, it was obvious how mad he was.

“I'll be here as long as this lightning is!” Bai Xiaochun replied coolly, emphasizing his words with the flick of his sleeve.

“You....” The ghost face very nearly descended into insanity because of those words alone. He truly had never encountered anyone this shameless, and he was almost unable to hold back from rushing in to try to kill Bai Xiaochun, regardless of the cost.

Unfortunately, he simply couldn't afford to lose that much life force, and therefore, he had to endure the deadlock with gritted teeth.

"If you even come close to having what it takes, Bai Xiaochun, then come out and fight me. I'll definitely kill you!!" With that, the ghost face spun angrily, worried that he might give in to impulse if he stuck around locking horns with Bai Xiaochun.

"If you've got any skill, you spineless ghost, then come in here and fight!" With that, Bai Xiaochun flicked his sleeve, stuck his chin up, and sighed deeply. "With the flick of a sleeve, I, Bai Xiaochun, caused this demigod ghost to flee at the sight of me."

When the ghost face heard that, he gritted his teeth in fury, but reminded himself that he couldn't let himself be goaded, and continued to depart at top speed.

And thus, the thundercloud region became the line of demarcation.... One party wouldn't enter it, and the other wouldn't leave it....

Bai Xiaochun was very pleased with that. Feeling wonderful, he began to speed further into the depths of the thundercloud area, absorbing lightning every step of the way.

Eventually, he reached the very center of the region, where there was so much lightning that it was almost impossible to see clearly. There, he sat down cross-legged, and began to work on his cultivation.

"One of these days I'm going to show that old ghost a thing or two!" Snorting coldly, he closed his eyes and began to meditate.

The lightning here contained both life force and the energy of heaven and earth. To Bai Xiaochun, it was even more beneficial than the lightning in the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect, and caused his cultivation base to make constant progress. In addition, his Undying Blood was getting very close to the fifty percent level.

As for the ghost face, he left and cooled down a bit. Then he spent some more time trying to think of a way to take control of the magical item. However, in the end, he could only sigh and dispel such thoughts.

“What’s done is done! The only thing I can do now is get out of here and try to take control of it from the outside!” Eyes glittering, he went about trying to determine if the magical item had an exit.

Time passed. A year flew by.

During that time, Bai Xiaochun was completely focused on cultivation. It wasn’t that he was particularly interested in cultivation at the moment, but rather, that he had nothing else to do. And considering that he didn’t dare to leave the thundercloud region, he was basically stuck with cultivation as his only option.

The laughing-crying ghost face continued to descend into madness. He had come to the realization that there was no exit, and no way out, no matter what he did.

Now that he realized he was trapped, his mood only got worse. If that were all there were to the situation, it might not have been a big deal. After all, he was confident that he would be able to get out sooner or later.

However... he soon realized that his cultivation base was slowly being suppressed. By now, he had slipped from having demigod battle prowess, all the way down to the quasi-demigod level. To his anxiety, he realized that it was likely the spirit automaton of the magical item that was doing this to him. And worse... this was only the beginning. As time went on, the limitations would grow more severe.

“How could this be happening!?!?!?” he howled in panicked rage. All of a sudden he realized that his luck had taken a turn for the worse from the moment he encountered Bai Xiaochun....

Meanwhile, neither the ghost face nor Bai Xiaochun had any way

to know that while they were trapped in the world of the magical item, things were happening out in the lands of Heavenspan. The Celestial had issued orders that the four riversource sects, as well as the sects from the Middle and Lower Reaches... begin to prepare for war!!

10,000 years had passed since the last great war with the Wildlands, and the time had come for another one to begin!

This time, the Great Wall had collapsed, and the Deadmire was no longer what it used to be. It was easy to imagine... how deadly and destructive this war would be!

Chapter 983: Its Not Fair!

In reality, it was a war that had begun much earlier. If the Celestial had won that spectacular battle in the Wildlands, the fighting would have broken out immediately.

But he had lost that showdown, and then met defeat again on the bone galleon. These successive losses ate away at the Celestial's patience. And it was made worse by the fact that Big Fatty Zhang and some other lower-level cultivators had actually left the world, while he remained behind, stuck.

"Gravekeeper, you bastard, I know you have even more backup plans. But I'm done playing games!" Eyes flickering with madness, the Celestial issued his Dharmic decree!

The Wildlands were to be destroyed! The gravekeeper was to be killed! The Hell-Emperor was to be executed!

Perhaps it would destroy the heavens and crush the earth. Perhaps it would end the world. But at least the Celestial would finally become the true ruler of it all, and thus achieve his long-cherished wish of opening the Worldgate.

The Celestial's Dharmic decree sent all of the lands of Heavenspan into action. Whether they wanted to or not, all cultivators in all sects were to participate in the war effort.

Only a few people knew the true reasons for what was happening. For the rest, it was enough to know that the Wildlands and the Heavenspan River had a feud that went back many years.

As the sects in the lands of Heavenspan prepared for war, the Grand Heavenmaster in the Wildlands finally relinquished official control of the empire to the Arch-Emperor. Countless tribes of savage giants were mobilized, and the four heavenly kings marshaled their four enormous armies. It was with great fanfare that all of the Wildlands prepared to go to war.

The ten heavenly dukes, the more than one hundred heavenly marquises, and countless necromancer clans were all marshalling their forces!

As the sergeant major of the Giant Ghost Legion, Mistress Red-Dust had already donned her battle armor, and stood at the front of an endless army of cultivators, bristling with a murderous aura as she stared in the direction of the lands of Heavenspan.

However, deep within her eyes, in a place where no one could see, were complicated emotions and thoughts.

She wasn't the only one thinking about Bai Xiaochun. Chen Manyao, the Hell-Emperor, Zhou Hong, and many other people who now knew who Bai Xiaochun really was were all thinking about him.

The truth was that from the moment the Great Wall fell, many people had been waiting for this war to come.

And now... it was here!

In the shortest of times, both the Wildlands and the Heavenspan River region were completely abuzz.

One of the only peaceful places in the world was inside the magical item in which Bai Xiaochun was currently stuck. To him, it was a holy land of cultivation. To the laughing-crying ghost face, it was a hellish prison.

Whether it was the stifling pressure of the magical item, or the despair the ghost face felt at not being able to find an exit, he was sure that he was about to be driven completely insane. Even worse was that the lightning seemed to be growing weaker, and Bai Xiaochun's aura, stronger.

The ghost face could sense that Bai Xiaochun was nearing the late Deva Realm, which caused his mind to reel.

"Why does it have to be this way?!?! How come that bastard can absorb the spiritual energy here, but I can't?!?! Dammit. If he were

stuck just like me, it wouldn't be a big deal. But he can actually increase his cultivation base!!" The ghost face howled to the heavens in madness, but it did no good. With every day that passed, he grew weaker, and his opponent grew stronger. Obviously, it would eventually reach the point where he wasn't a match in a fight.

"It's not fair!!"

The mere thought of what might happen caused the ghost face to shiver in despair. Filled with a sense of madness, he began to desperately search for an exit again, which suddenly caused him to think of the Celestial, who was apparently in a very similar state of mind.

"I have to get out...." he thought, nearly weeping as he searched and searched.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun was doing everything he could to increase his cultivation base. As he did, less and less lightning was visible. The spiritual energy in the magical item had built up for countless years, but now, Bai Xiaochun was slowly absorbing it into himself.

Under most circumstances, he would have had a difficult time focusing solely on cultivation for so long. But in the world of the magical item, with the ghost face as such a huge threat, he was very anxious, and was working harder than ever.

"That ghost face is terrifying!" he sighed. Considering the pressure he was currently feeling, he was going all out, much the same way he had back in the Spirit Stream Sect when he was studying plants and vegetation. As he absorbed the lightning, his cultivation base increased, and before long, he could push his Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformation all the way to the sixth transformation!

However, things weren't over yet. Before long, he reached the seventh transformation, which simultaneously pushed him closer

and closer to the peak of the mid Deva Realm.

As his aura grew stronger, colors flashed in the sky of the world, and a powerful wind screamed.

“I'm so strong now! Once I break through to the late Deva Realm, I should be able to fight that ghost face!” Filled with excitement, he went on to absorb more lightning.

In contrast, the ghost face's trepidation grew more intense with every day that passed. As he saw himself growing weaker and weaker, he sank deeper and deeper into despair.

In addition to the spiritual energy that was in the lightning, there was also abundant life force, which Bai Xiaochun didn't hesitate to absorb.

It had a shocking effect on his Undying Blood. As his cultivation base broke through into the peak of the mid Deva Realm, his Undying Blood... reached the fifty percent level!

When that happened, his eyes shone brightly with pride.

However, before he could revel in his excitement, rumbling sounds echoed out as all of the lightning vanished completely.

Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes and looked around to find the entire area empty. At the same time, the ghost face was visible at the edge of the thundercloud region, looking equally shocked.

In that instant, the ghost face went mad with joy. Cackling loudly, he burst into motion.

“This time, you're dead, Bai Xiaochun!!”

Bai Xiaochun shivered in fear and began to back up.

“Dammit, why is this thundercloud region so unstable? After absorbing lightning for so long, it went empty, just like that?!?!” The sight of the ghost face rushing toward him caused his scalp to tingle so hard it felt like it might explode. Without any further hesitation, he began to flee at top speed, using his Undying Hex to

vanish, reappear off in the distance, and then continue onward in a blur.

Behind him, the ghost face was virtually going crazy. Despite having his cultivation base suppressed, he was going all out to get to Bai Xiaochun. He could tell that if he didn't take advantage of this chance to kill the damnable Bai Xiaochun now, and his cultivation base dropped further, then the next time they met, he wouldn't qualify to fight him.

That terrifying possibility fueled the ghost face's mad rush forward.

"Bai Xiaochun!!" he howled in madness, teleporting out of the thundercloud region to appear only about 300 meters behind Bai Xiaochun. Then he focused all of the demigod power he could, sending out crushing force in the hopes of smashing Bai Xiaochun to bits.

Nearly overwhelmed by the sensation of crisis, Bai Xiaochun unleashed the power of his mid Deva Realm cultivation base, combining it with all of the energy from his Undying Blood. Then, he used it to power his Undying Hex, ensuring that he vanished before the ghost face's blow could land!

Blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun's mouth as he reappeared, which he quickly wiped away. The truth was that it actually didn't matter what injuries he sustained like this. His Undying Blood was so powerful that he almost completely recovered in only moments. In fact, he had even been able to borrow some of the momentum of the incoming attack to flee more quickly.

He shot away in a bright beam of light, moving at incredible speed as the ghost face chased after him, attacking relentlessly. One glob of black smoke after another shot out, but Bai Xiaochun avoided them all. Although he ended up coughing up blood as a result, overall, he wasn't even starting to feel tired. As for the ghost face, he was so depressed he felt like collapsing mentally.

“Dammit. Dammit!! Even though I'm weaker than normal, I still don't get how can this guy run away from me so quickly!!”

Chapter 984: Crazy Ghost

Bai Xiaochun was so focused on fleeing for his life that he wasn't paying any attention to how much faster he was than his pursuer. He was only thinking about getting away as quickly as possible.

Whooshing and whistling sounds echoed out in all directions as he became a blur of afterimages that split the air. In fact, it was actually impossible to tell which one of them was his true form.

The ghost face was going so crazy that he even used a trump card divine ability, causing the smoke which surrounded him to condense down into a sphere. However he simply couldn't close the distance as Bai Xiaochun headed to... the wind valleys!

"Noooo!!" he wailed. He pushed forward with a burst of cultivation base power, causing the black sphere to transform into numerous black arrows that shot toward Bai Xiaochun!

There were so many of them that they were impossible to count, a sight which caused Bai Xiaochun to scream in fear when he noticed.

He was using the Undying Hex, the Mountain Shaking Bash, and every other magical technique he could think of, even the Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformation!

Even as the black arrows were about to hit him, he entered the wind valleys. At that point, the arrows exploded, creating a powerful attack that shot into the wind valleys after him.

Blood sprayed out of Bai Xiaochun's mouth, but he didn't even look over his shoulder. He just shot deeper into the wind valleys, to immediately be assailed by the powerful, biting winds. However, as soon as any wind touched him, it transformed into a shocking energy of heaven and earth that entered his pores and began to flow through his body.

Unfortunately, Bai Xiaochun was in no mood to even notice that.

He continued to speed along, coughing up blood over and over. Only when he was deep in the wind valleys did he finally stop, panting, and look around to make sure he was alone. At that point, he turned around and realized that the ghost face hadn't pursued him into the valleys. Finally, he sighed in relief.

“Think you can kill Lord Bai, you old ghost? Stop dreaming!!” At this point, he looked around more closely, and realized that the screaming winds were doing exactly what the lightning had done: filling him with both spiritual power and life force.

Immediately, he brightened up.

“Hmph! A gentleman can wait for a decade to get revenge if he needs to. And since I, Bai Xiaochun, am a gentleman, I'll just wait until I have my cultivation base breakthrough, and then I'll go beat the crap out of that old ghost!” The mere thought of the scene which had just played out caused his heart to tremble in fear. And yet, there was also something odd about it.

“Now that I think about it, that old ghost seemed weaker than before! He couldn't even catch up to me.” Shaking his head, he thought back to how the baby girl had said that as she gained more control over the world, she would suppress the ghost face.

“One factor must be that my improved cultivation base gives me greater speed. The other is that the ghost face is being suppressed!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, he started to get so excited that his eyes lit up.

“Until the baby girl wakes up, there's no way to get out of here. That means the old ghost is trapped just like me, and getting weaker constantly. Meanwhile, I'm getting stronger....” The more he thought about it, the more excited he got.

Finally, he looked off into the distance and shouted, “You just wait, you old ghost! Once I break through, I'll beat you so badly that Ghostmother won't even recognize you! If I don't, then my name's not Bai Xiaochun!”

He powered his voice with his cultivation base power so that it echoed out of the wind valleys and all the way to the livid ghost face.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” he howled in frustration. After chasing Bai Xiaochun to the wind valleys and then seeing that the wind didn’t affect him, the ghost face truly felt himself descending into insanity. The winds seemed to almost treat Bai Xiaochun like their own ancestor!

At this point, the ghost face decided to try to step into the winds himself, only to find that they almost tore his soul body to shreds, and also took away some of his life force. He immediately backed away.

Bai Xiaochun had fled as quickly as a mouse with its tail on fire, and was soon in the depths of the wind valleys, leaving the ghost face feeling completely helpless, and cursing heaven and earth for the vile way they treated him.

He knew that if things kept going this way, then he was truly finished.... The mere thought of Bai Xiaochun experiencing a breakthrough in the wind valleys caused the ghost face’s expression to turn very grim.

“This guy will seek revenge over the smallest grievance! If he breaks through....”

The ghost face couldn’t have felt more regret. By now, he realized that he really shouldn’t have come into this damned magical item with Bai Xiaochun.

“How can this guy be so unreasonable?!?!?” Turning around, he fled to yet again try to find a way out.

If the ghost face had ever met any disciples from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect or the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect, perhaps those disciples would have told him that what was truly terrifying about Bai Xiaochun wasn’t any so-called

unreasonableness, but rather... his infinitely powerful ability to cause disasters!

After all, both riversource sects had borne witness to the fact that, given the right circumstances and resources, he could very nearly destroy the world.

Before long, half a year had gone by....

During that time, the war preparations were completed, and the campaign that the Celestial wanted finally began!

The forces of the Heavenspan River Region invaded the Wildlands on four fronts. The four massive armies were led by the riversource sects, and filled in with the forces of the Middle and Lower Reaches.

The Wildlands fought back primarily with the armies of the four heavenly kings, each of whom faced one of the riversource sects. The war... had begun!!

Neither Bai Xiaochun nor the ghost face were aware of this development. If Bai Xiaochun had known, he would have been profoundly nervous, and would likely have been incapable of focusing on cultivation. As for the ghost face, if he had known, he would have been filled with even more regret at having followed Bai Xiaochun into this desolate place.

In the outside world, a war between the Wildlands and the Heavenspan forces would have been a goldmine for him. He could have consumed people left and right, and would have eventually reached a peak level of cultivation base power that would have enabled him to manipulate the war to his own benefit.

Instead, the ghost face was hiding in a low-lying mountain, his heart filled with humiliation, viciousness, and terror.

The reason for that was that during the past half year, his cultivation base had continued to drop. As of this point, he was no longer as strong as a demigod, but rather, in the great circle of the

Deva Realm!

It was like a living nightmare that he almost couldn't believe was real. After dropping so far in his cultivation base, he finally reached the point where he didn't dare to go outside. Therefore, he had remained in hiding for a full three months.

A while back, he had been wavering on whether or not to simply go into the wind valleys and try to find Bai Xiaochun. However, he would now be incapable of killing him even if he found him. Even worse was the aura he could sense in the wind valleys, which was now getting very close to the late Deva Realm.

“Dammit, dammit, DAMMIT!!” Grief and indignation filled him as he thought about how powerful Bai Xiaochun was now. After all, his own power level was now equivalent to the great circle of the Deva Realm. If Bai Xiaochun broke through... the consequences would be unimaginable.

“Why does it have to be this way?!?!” he moaned, grabbing the smoke that made up his hair and tugging on it viciously. In his fear, he could only cautiously focus on Bai Xiaochun's aura and its progress.

A few more months passed, and the ghost face's cultivation base dropped further. He was now in the late Deva Realm.... Worse, he could sense the raging aura in the wind valleys, and it caused him to shiver in fear.

“Fail! Fail!! I curse you to fail!!” And thus the ghost sat there, nervously cursing Bai Xiaochun.

Unfortunately for him, Bai Xiaochun's aura only continued to get more powerful. In the end, he achieved his breakthrough, and stepped into the late Deva Realm. At that point, the ghost face wailed in despair.

It was also in that moment that a pleased voice erupted from within the wind valleys.

“Alright, you old ghost. Lord Bai is coming for you!”

Chapter 985: Thrashing The Old Ghost....

As soon as the ghost face heard those words, he shivered, causing countless streams of black smoke to spread out in all directions.

However, after a long moment passed, and Bai Xiaochun still hadn't come out from the wind valleys, the ghost face looked over in shock, then began to curse inwardly.

Back in the wind valleys, Bai Xiaochun cleared his throat, savoring the feeling of his breakthrough, and the majestic cultivation base power that he now possessed.

“Late Deva Realm!!” he thought. “I, Bai Xiaochun, am finally in the late Deva Realm!”

Eyes shining with excitement, he once again raised his voice and said, “Alright, you old ghost. Lord Bai is really coming for you this time!”

Outside, the ghost face's expression turned dark with rage. However, since he was made from black smoke, it was difficult to see how dark it actually was....

By now, Bai Xiaochun could tell that he could reach the eighth of the Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations.

“My eighth transformation is actually equivalent to the eleventh!” Although he couldn't say that he was invincible in all creation, he was definitely close.

“And my Undying Blood....” Licking his lips, he studied his Undying Blood, and confirmed that he had broken through in that regard as well. As of this moment, sixty percent of the blood in his body was Undying Blood!

That made his powers of regeneration even more shocking than before. In terms of his own life force, he was now fairly certain that, even if heaven and earth were destroyed around him, he would not be destroyed.

“This is unheard-of strength!” he thought, feeling more confident in himself than ever. “Nobody under the level of a demigod could beat me!”

In his pride, he couldn’t help but raise his voice again.... “Alright, old ghost, this time, I really am coming over there!”

At that point, his eyes suddenly flickered.

“Why isn’t the old ghost responding to me? It seems his cultivation base really must be dropping....” During the time he had been working on reaching the late Deva Realm, he hadn’t stopped paying any attention to things outside of the wind valleys.

Because of that, he could sense that, thanks to the pressure of the magical item, the ghost face’s cultivation base had dropped. That, coupled with his taunts from earlier, confirmed everything.

Eyes shining with determination, he shot into motion, leaving the wind valleys and appearing in the world beyond them.

Bai Xiaochun seemed like the wind itself, a hurricane that blasted across the lands with explosive power.

Although he looked quite impressive, he was actually being very cautious, and was ready to fall back at a moment’s notice. But after emerging into the open and blinking a few times, he realized that the ghost face was nowhere to be seen.

Eyes lighting up, he sent some divine sense out, causing heaven and earth to distort from the sheer force. Within moments, the entire world of the magical item was visible via his late Deva Realm divine sense.

It only took a moment before he found the ghost face, fleeing in the opposite direction.

The instant Bai Xiaochun’s divine sense locked onto him, he confirmed that he had dropped into the late Deva Realm.

Bai Xiaochun immediately roared with laughter, causing all of

the anxiety that had built up since he had arrived in the magical item to drain away. He suddenly felt carefree and excited as he began to give chase.

“Want to race with Lord Bai, eh, you old ghost?” With that, he drew upon the full power of his cultivation base, using the Undying Hex and the Mountain Shaking Bash together to rocket through the air and appear right behind the ghost face.

The ghost face’s expression was unsightly to the extreme, and fury burned in his heart. Even as he fled in absolute disgrace, he opened his mouth and shouted, causing countless smoke mouths to suddenly shoot toward Bai Xiaochun.

Shocked, Bai Xiaochun backed up and performed a double-handed incantation gesture, sending frigid qi out to meet the gaping mouths.

As soon as the two met, the seemingly shocking mouths collapsed into bits of black smoke. Meanwhile, the blast of frigid qi proceeded directly toward the ghost face.

Cursing bitterly, the ghost face continued to flee. In contrast, Bai Xiaochun’s eyes were shining brightly. Laughing heartily, he clenched his right hand into a fist and punched out.

Rumbling booms filled the area as the blow hit the ghost face, causing the smoke he was composed of to roil unstably.

“Don’t push things too far, Bai Xiaochun!”

“Do you dare to fight with Lord Bai, you old ghost?!?!” With that, he used the eighth Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformation, growing to a height of 240 meters and bursting with energy.

The moon sigil in his left eye shone radiantly, pushing his battle prowess to even higher heights. Although he wasn’t quite at the demigod level, he was certainly very close.

Waving his hand, he attacked again, and the ghost face was powerless to fight back. The situation between the two of them

had been completely reversed, and despite the fact that the ghost face had known this would happen, it was still difficult to accept it. A boom rang out, and the ghost face was shattered by Bai Xiaochun's fist strike.

The innumerable strands of black smoke quickly formed back into the image of the ghost face, who was experiencing something he had never before experienced. Long ago, Ghostmother had relied on the backing of an archaean to capture him, and had also treated him very politely. Here... Bai Xiaochun, a person the ghost face could crush easily were his cultivation base not suppressed, was smacking him around with deadly force.

The ghost face was so angry that his voice quavered as he shouted, "Don't force my hand, Bai Xiaochun!!"

"Fudge, I'm not forcing you to do anything. I'm just beating you!" Bai Xiaochun felt wonderful at having all the stress from before melt away, to be replaced by remarkable joy. Shouting at the top of his lungs, he strode forward and unleashed another fist strike.

More booms rang out.

"Who forced you to try to kill me before?!?!" Another fist strike!

The ghost face couldn't dodge out of the way in time. No amount of shrieking or divine abilities or magical techniques did any good. Yet again, his body collapsed, to be reformed a moment later.

"Who forced you to chase me into this place?!" Bai Xiaochun struck out with his fist again!

"Who forced you to keep chasing me once we got stuck inside?!?!"

"I ran into that thundercloud region, and you still wouldn't let me go!"

"The lightning dispersed, and you started chasing me again!" He emphasized everything he said with a fist strike, each of which caused the ghost face to shatter and reform.

“I'm gonna kill you, Bai Xiaochun!” the ghost face howled madly. Finally, he couldn't take it anymore, and lunged at Bai Xiaochun.

However, before he could get close, Bai Xiaochun leaned back and kicked out, planting his foot directly onto the ghost face.

“Quite the bragger, aren't we? Still think you can kill me?!” The ghost face broke apart and then formed back together, whereupon Bai Xiaochun shattered him again.

Finally, he reached out, grabbed the ghost face by his smoke hair, and smashed him down onto the ground. He wasn't even using divine abilities, only his fleshly body power, and the force of the Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformation.

Screams rang out as Bai Xiaochun trampled on the ghost face, which shattered and reformed the entire time. Eventually, it burned some life force to try to flee.

Flicking his sleeve, Bai Xiaochun stuck his chin up and proudly said, “Think you can just run? If I don't beat the crap out of you until you cry uncle, then my name isn't Bai Xiaochun!”

With that, he continued to give chase.

Chapter 986: Dead?

Rumbling booms filled the entire world of the magical item, mixed in with the shrieks of the ghost face, whose heart was filled with both madness and humiliation.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” he howled. “If I get out of here, I’m gonna slaughter your whole clan! I’m gonna skin you alive and make you into a [sky lantern](#)!!”

Of course, he knew that shouting in this fashion was useless, and might make Bai Xiaochun want to kill him even more. But he was simply too frustrated, and if he didn’t vent somehow, then he would likely explode physically before Bai Xiaochun even killed him.

“Quite the temper!” Bai Xiaochun said with a glare. Snorting coldly, he accelerated, and more booms rang out. The ghost face shattered and reformed over and over again. Eventually, when it was obvious that he couldn’t escape, his eyes lit with madness, and he began to burn his divine soul to fuel a secret magic. A popping sound rang out, and he vanished into thin air.

“Eee?” Bai Xiaochun murmured. He sent some divine sense out to try to track down the ghost face, but after sweeping the entire world of the magical item, he couldn’t find even a trace of him.

“He comes from beyond the heavens, and was strong enough to fight the Celestial. I guess he must have some other strange techniques at his disposal....” After some contemplation, he still wasn’t willing to accept defeat so easily. He was convinced that his opponent might be able to hide, but wouldn’t be able to do so forever, and definitely wouldn’t be able to escape from the world of the magical item.

That, in turn, meant that he would be able to find him sooner or later.

“Ah, whatever. I’ll let him off the hook for now. Later on when I get bored, I can track him down and mop the floor with him. I can’t believe he dares to fight me! When I, Bai Xiaochun, get pissed off, I frighten even myself!” Snorting coldly, he put the ghost face out of his mind and returned to the wind valleys to continue his cultivation. At the moment, beating the ghost face nearly senseless had improved his mood significantly.

Meanwhile, in a random mountainous region far in the distance, the air rippled and distorted, and the ghost face cautiously appeared in the open. At first, he was somewhat blurry, as though he were still within the world, but separated from it by a layer of obscurity.

That diaphanous barrier was the key way he had evaded Bai Xiaochun’s divine sense. However, he was clearly in a very weakened state; the secret magic he had used came at a very steep price.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” he growled bitterly through gritted teeth. At the moment, he felt hopeless and lost; despite putting everything on the line, he had failed, leaving him on the verge of weeping.

An entire month flew by, which the ghost face spent in abject terror. With every moment that passed, he worried that Bai Xiaochun might suddenly pop up in front of him. It was a true torment.

In sharp contrast, Bai Xiaochun felt more blessed than ever. As he continued to practice cultivation in the wind valleys, his place in the late Deva Realm grew very stable. Sadly, the winds were also beginning to weaken, until one day, they vanished.

After his experience in the thundercloud region, it was no surprise to Bai Xiaochun. Eyes shining with anticipation, he looked in the direction of the sea of rainwater.

“I wonder... if I’ll become a demigod in here?” Excited by the mere thought, he headed toward the rain region.

Soon, he arrived, and didn't even pause before entering the area.

Just like the lightning and the wind, the falling rain was filled with spiritual energy and life force. Bai Xiaochun laughed heartily as he headed to the depths of the region, sat down cross-legged, and began to absorb the spiritual energy there.

The world of the magical item was growing very quiet and calm. Months passed, and the ghost face continued to stew in bitterness and fear at the prospect of Bai Xiaochun suddenly trying to kill him. It was all made worse by the fact that Bai Xiaochun was getting more powerful by the day, whereas the ghost face... continued to experience a drop in cultivation base.

By now, he was fully in the mid Deva Realm, a level of weakness that filled his heart with increasing levels of terror. He didn't ever dare to go out in the open, and could only pray that Bai Xiaochun continued to spend all his time working on cultivation.

Despite hoping that Bai Xiaochun had forgotten about him, he also continued to curse him in every vicious way imaginable.

“I curse you to die by spontaneous explosion!!”

“I curse you to experience energy deviation, and be destroyed in body and soul!”

“I, once a mighty quasi-archaeon... could once kill an entire horde of worms like Bai Xiaochun with a mere wave of my finger. This level of bullying is ridiculous! I will definitely have my revenge one day!!!”

The ghost face looked up into the sky and reminisced about his past glories, which were the only things that gave him the courage to keep going in this situation.

Perhaps it was the ghost face's sharp-tongued cursing, or perhaps there was some other reason, but that afternoon, Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes.

He suddenly felt uncomfortable, as though something wicked

were lurking outside of the sea of rain. After only a short moment of thought, he came to the conclusion that it must be the ghost face.

“That old ghost is definitely saying bad things about me!” After looking off into the distance, he sped out of the rain region. Instead of sending his divine sense out, he simply relied on that sensation of wickedness to begin to track down its source.

The ghost face was hiding in the mountains, gritting his teeth, when suddenly his face fell. Then he burst into motion.

In the following instant, a boom echoed out from the spot he had just occupied, accompanied by a massive shockwave. Shrieking, the ghost face fled, popping into countless strands of black smoke that fled in all directions.

That was when Bai Xiaochun stepped out of nowhere.

“So, it really was you cursing me, you old ghost!” With that, he used the Undying Hex in combination with a fist strike.

His target wasn't the ghost, but rather, a random spot in the air. The blow caused a black hole to spring up, the gravitational force of which caused all of the fleeing strands of black smoke to stop moving.

That brief pause was all the time Bai Xiaochun needed. Waving his sleeve, he unleashed the power of the late Deva Realm, creating a tempest that filled the entire area.

The black smoke shattered, reforming moments later into the full ghost face, who then tried to escape in a different direction. Yet again, he used that costly secret magic of his to vanish.

Irritated, Bai Xiaochun decided not to go back to the rain region, but instead spent the next several months thoroughly searching the world of the magical item. Occasionally, the ghost face's secret magic would expire, and Bai Xiaochun would find him, whereupon he would be forced to use the secret magic again.

And thus Bai Xiaochun harried the ghost face without letup. After another month with no rest, the ghost face was on the verge of complete collapse, and was convinced that if things kept going on this way, his divine soul would eventually expire without the need for Bai Xiaochun to attack.

“He’s not going to give up until I’m dead, is he...?” The ghost face had already descended so far into madness he was almost dead inside. Again he used his secret magic, and when Bai Xiaochun found him this time, he spun, eyes bloodshot. Flames burst out around him, and he howled as though he were ready to fight to the death. Throwing caution to the wind, he did something he had never done so far. Whereas normally he existed only in the form of a head, all of a sudden, he sprouted a torso and four limbs. In the blink of an eye, he had become a pitch-black statue!

It was no illusory statue. It was corporeal, and possessed a powerful aura, like that of a god of battle. Without any hesitation, the statue lunged toward Bai Xiaochun.

“I am a mighty quasi-archaeon! I’ve lived longer than you can imagine! It would be better to be dead than be tormented by the likes of you! Maybe you’re using underhanded means to gain the upper hand, but... I simply can’t endure anymore! Perhaps I’ll die, but at least I’ll die with dignity! Alright, if you want me dead, Bai Xiaochun, then bring it on!!”

The ghost face closed in, cackling madly, clearly intent on going out in a blaze of glory. As for Bai Xiaochun, his eyes glittered as he clenched his right hand into a fist and unleashed the Undying Emperor’s Fist.

Heaven and earth trembled violently as the shadowy emperor appeared behind him and also clenched his fist. When his blow landed on the pitch-black statue, it exploded into pieces!

The aura of death spread out in all directions, and the rubble that remained of the statue scattered onto the ground.

Not a scrap of life force could be sensed, as though the ghost face had truly died!

The backlash of the blow caused Bai Xiaochun's entire body to vibrate as he staggered backward about 300 meters. There, he looked up in the direction of the rubble, a suspicious look on his face.

“Dead?”

Chapter 987: The War Escalates

“That was too easy, wasn’t it? He’s dead, just like that?” Bai Xiaochun walked back up to the shattered pieces of the statue and examined them closely. Sure enough, they emitted a strong aura of death.

His divine sense didn’t reveal any traces of life force, and not even picking up some of the pieces of the statue and studying them closely provided any evidence that the ghost face was still alive.

After all, the ghost face had been suppressed all the way down to the mid Deva Realm, whereas Bai Xiaochun was in the late Deva Realm. It was no exaggeration to say that killing someone in the mid Deva Realm would be easy for him.

What made Bai Xiaochun suspicious was that, before being suppressed, the ghost face had been able to fight with the Celestial.

“He was a tough opponent, and a quasi-archaeon at that!” He pursed his lips in thought as he considered just going back to his cultivation. However, he simply couldn’t dispel his suspicions, so he sent his divine sense out to fill the entire world of the magical item. Only after finding no further evidence did he decide to leave.

Despite having seen the ghost face die with his own eyes, he still couldn’t quite believe that it was true. In the end, though, he wasn’t too worried about the situation. The world of the magical item was still sealed, and therefore, there were only three possibilities. First, the ghost face was really dead. Second, he had somehow managed to escape the magical item. Third, he had faked his death.

As for the rubble of the statue, he decided not to take it with him. If the ghost face was really dead, then the rubble would be useless. If he were alive, then perhaps it might have some hidden function. But in the end, there was no one else in the world with them who could take it away.

Another month went by. Every few days, Bai Xiaochun would go back to the rubble of the statue and study it closely.

It never moved, and the aura of death around it was slowly dissipating. Clearly, the remains of the statue were slowly transforming into nothing but ordinary debris. Eventually, Bai Xiaochun's divine sense couldn't even pick up any traces of the ghost face's aura of death.

"No way. He really died? I was still having fun!" Bai Xiaochun's suspicions were starting to fade. Another month went by, and he couldn't detect any of the ghost face's aura.

"If I remove the second possibility from the list, then that means he's either really dead, or... he faked his death. I guess I need to do some tests." After rubbing his chin in thought, he waved his hands and gathered all of the rubble together.

"Let me tell you, you old ghost, faking your death isn't going to do any good. If that's what's going on here, you're going to regret it." He made a few more threats, but got no response from the rubble. Finally, he snorted coldly, gathered the rubble up, and returned to the rain region.

Considering how much spiritual energy Bai Xiaochun had absorbed, the rainwater was growing weaker and scarcer. By the time he brought the rubble of the statue back, it was little more than a drizzle.

Simply allowing some water to sprinkle on the rubble didn't seem like a good plan, so he found a pond, which he tossed the rubble into. Then he performed an incantation gesture, funneling large amounts of rainwater into the pond until it was full to the brim.

Then he sat there and watched the rubble closely, hoping that this method would be able to confirm or deny his suspicions. After all, he remembered how harmful the lightning had been to the ghost face back in the thundercloud region.

It was the same with the wind in the wind valleys. Based on what he could guess, the rain from this area should have a similar effect.

After the rubble was submerged in the water, it remained motionless for a time. However, after a while, wisps of life force appeared, and the rubble began to twitch and vibrate. Then, a moment later, a hoarse scream erupted out.

“Things aren’t over between us, Bai Xiaochun!!”

Eyes shining, Bai Xiaochun replied, “So you really did fake your death, you old ghost!”

A moment later, the rubble in the rainwater simply vanished.

“Faking your death will do no good when Lord Bai is around!” Laughing heartily, he sent his divine sense out, and could immediately detect the ghost face’s aura. Without any hesitation, he began to chase it.

Just outside the rain region, the rubble of the statue faded into existence, collapsed into black smoke, and then formed back into the ghost face.

He was much, much weaker than before, and his eyes shone with fear, as well as suppressed anger that couldn’t possibly be vented.

Having been convinced that Bai Xiaochun wouldn’t stop until he was dead, he had faked his own death. It was the only plan he had been able to come up with. In order to make the entire thing seem realistic, he had actually died. After all, he existed as a soul body, and cultivated ghost magic. Therefore, as far as he was concerned, there was little difference between real death and fake death.

If everything had gone as expected, then no matter what Bai Xiaochun chose to do with the rubble, it would eventually have turned into ash. After a sixty-year-cycle passed, the ghost face would have awoken from within the ash.

Unfortunately... the unbelievably skeptical Bai Xiaochun had actually taken him into the rainwater region, and submerged him

in a massive accumulation of spiritual energy. That energy subverted his state of fake death, and then inflicted horrendous pain on him as it ate away at his actual life force. At that point, he had been forced to awaken.

He had been given no other choice but take action, lest his life force truly be drained.

In the very end, he had again used that secret magic of his to escape the rain region. Of course, every time he used the secret magic, it was harmful and exhausting. And yet, no amount of exhaustion could surpass the despair he felt.

“Heavens!” he wailed bitterly. “What did I do wrong in my life?! Why did I have to get wrapped up with this heaven-damned Bai Xiaochun!?!?” By this point, he could already sense the raging aura of Bai Xiaochun closing in. Shivering in despair, he again called on his secret magic to flee.

Bai Xiaochun stepped out of thin air a moment later, looked around, and then cleared his throat.

“Hey little ghost,” he said loudly. “Hurry up and hide. I’m coming for you!” Vanishing, he once again began to track down the ghost using his previous methods.

A few more months passed, during which time Bai Xiaochun enjoyed himself thoroughly, and the ghost face wallowed in misery.

Bai Xiaochun would work on his cultivation a bit, and then track down the ghost face and beat him up a bit. Eventually, the ghost face would use his secret magic to flee. When Bai Xiaochun was in a good mood, he would only chase the ghost face down a few times before letting him get away.

When he was in a bad mood, he would chase him relentlessly to the point of capturing him and bringing him back to the rain region. Either way, the howls of the ghost face filled the world of

the magical item on a daily basis.

The months that passed were like lifetimes of misery to the ghost face.

By this point, his cultivation base had dropped down to the early Deva Realm.

In contrast, Bai Xiaochun was making constant progress. His Undying Blood was now seventy percent complete, and his cultivation base was getting very close to the great circle of the Deva Realm.

More months passed, and the rain vanished. Perhaps he was starting to get tired of messing with the ghost face, or perhaps it was because of his impending cultivation base watershed, but in either case, he spent less time harrying the ghost face, who was so excited about the development that he wept in delight.

Meanwhile in the outside world, the forces of the Heavenspan River region were at war with the Wildlands. The fighting was building up to a climax. Nearly fifty percent of the cultivators from the Upper, Middle, and Lower Reaches had been deployed, a massive force that shook heaven and earth.

The Heavenspan forces were the invaders in what was a very bloody conflict. The Wildlands didn't have the same resources as the Heavenspan cultivators, but had far more troops. All tribes, all clans, all heavenly marquises and dukes, and each of the four heavenly kings fought with bloodshot eyes.

Fierce fighting played out everywhere!

Both sides had lost devas in battle. Every time such a thing happened, the heavens trembled. However, what was even more shocking was that... the demigod experts on both sides had begun to take part in the conflict!

The battlefield was the Wildlands, and by this point, the four heavenly kings were facing off with the demigod patriarchs from

the four riversource sects!

Chapter 988: The Great Circle!

As the war outside raged like an unstoppable wildfire, the rain vanished within the world of the magical item. Although Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base didn't experience a breakthrough, his Undying Blood was now seventy percent complete!

When that happened, Bai Xiaochun became so powerful that the world seemed different to him. It was as if merely looking around caused the light around him to grow darker.

He thrummed with life force to the point where he was fairly certain that although he couldn't quite live forever... he was very close to that level.

The only sad thing was that there was no way to test his strength. The ghost face was now so weak that he shivered in fear at the mere sight of Bai Xiaochun; doing experiments on him wouldn't be particularly effective.

However, after some self-examination, he was confident enough to assess himself.

"Even if I only used thirty percent of my cultivation base and fleshly body power, I would be just as strong as I was in the past.... Maybe I'm even strong enough... to fight with a demigod?" He took a deep breath of anticipation at the thought of leaving the world of the magical item and shocking everyone.

"I can still get stronger!" he thought. Exhilarated, he rose to his feet and headed to the last of the four areas in the world, the fire region. Now that the world was bereft of lightning, rain, and wind, it seemed very different from before. Although Bai Xiaochun couldn't be sure, he was fairly certain that, when he went into a trance, he could sense the aura of the baby girl.

"Now that I think about it, she should be close to finishing her work." After entering the fire region, he found one of the many

volcanoes there, where he sat down cross-legged to begin cultivation.

The energy of heaven and earth rushed toward him, slowly pushing his Undying Blood to the eighty percent level. As for his cultivation base, he was now creeping closer and closer to the great circle of the Deva Realm.

By now, he had reached the point where every time he sucked in some of the surrounding spiritual energy, it caused the entire fire region to tremble.

The ghost face could sense what was happening, and it gave birth to increased despair and fear within him. His cultivation base was at the point where he was about to drop from the deva level to the Nascent Soul stage. When that happened, it was likely that if Bai Xiaochun messed with him, he would be killed.

“I have to get out of here....” he thought, weeping. Yet again, he couldn’t help but sympathize with how the Celestial must feel.

“On the outside, I can make mincemeat of this damned Bai Xiaochun!!” The ghost face knew that, once outside of the world of the magical treasure, he would not be restricted and suppressed. He could recover his cultivation base, and be back at the same level he had been at when he had fought the Celestial. And he had long since sworn an oath that, when that happened, he would get payback for all the pain and suffering he had endured by venting on Bai Xiaochun.

As the ghost face wallowed in bitterness, Bai Xiaochun furthered his cultivation, and another year passed.

During that time, Bai Xiaochun did not kill the ghost face.... However, the ghost face wished on many occasions that he could die. The mere fact that he had held on for an entire year seemed like pure luck.

He couldn’t even count how many times Bai Xiaochun had come

to beat him up during that time. When Bai Xiaochun was in a good mood, he would beat him once. But if he was in a bad mood, he would beat him over and over again.

It reached the point where the ghost face stopped using his secret magic. Whenever Bai Xiaochun came for him, he would simply lay down and close his eyes in despair....

He had long since reached rock bottom. The more he fought back, the more Bai Xiaochun seemed to enjoy himself, whereas the more he resigned himself to his fate, the more bored he became.

He had now been stuck with Bai Xiaochun for more than two years, and the resulting torment had burned the image of Bai Xiaochun deep into his divine soul, along with a sense of indescribable terror.

As far as he was concerned, Bai Xiaochun was the most fear-inspiring individual he had ever encountered.

Regret plagued him constantly. He regretted even getting close to Bai Xiaochun, and regretted foolishly staying behind when Ghostmother left....

That decision was most likely the worst decision he had ever made in his entire life!

When he had been captured by Ghostmother in the world beyond, he had never experienced torment like this. She had mostly just used him to cast fear into the hearts of her enemies.

On many occasions, he had thought back to that moment when he allowed the Celestial to grab him. At that time, he could never have guessed that fleeing the control of Ghostmother and escaping the Celestial would end up with him being in the clutches of the terrifying Bai Xiaochun.

He had wanted to die on many occasions, and the bitterness he felt had him constantly recalling his past glories to keep himself going.

“This guy is completely inhuman....” Those were the words that echoed in his mind whenever he thought about Bai Xiaochun.

When Bai Xiaochun noticed how the ghost face had given up, and wasn't even fighting back, he started to feel a bit bad. On the other hand, he enjoyed having turned the tables and being able to beat his own persecutor. On a few occasions, he considered refraining from beating the ghost face, but then he realized that this was a quasi-archaean expert who had relentlessly tried to kill him. The thought of this ghost face very nearly causing him to lose his poor little life ensured that he couldn't hold back from beating him.

“Now that I think about it, my life is actually pretty legendary. I smacked a demigod, I smacked the Celestial, and now I've smacked a quasi-archaean to the point where he can't even fight back.” Sighing, he mused that his cultivation base really had become incredibly powerful in the past year.

By now, the flames in the fire region were almost gone. His cultivation base was on the verge of a breakthrough, and his Undying Blood was eighty percent complete.

He was relatively certain that after absorbing the rest of the sea of flames, he would reach the great circle of the Deva Realm!

During the past year, he had sensed the baby girl's aura growing stronger and stronger. Based on what he could tell, as he had absorbed the spiritual energy from the four main regions in the world, her fusion with the magical item had grown more complete.

“The moment I absorb all of the fire and achieve my breakthrough will definitely be the moment when she fully fuses with the magical item.” Eyes flickering, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture and waved his hands out in front of him.

What remained of the flames began to swirl toward him, surrounding him.

Of course, the fire didn't hurt him at all. It transformed into spiritual energy which rushed into his pores, converged in his energy passageways, and coursed throughout his body. Then, he used it to fuel the tenth Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformation.

The first nine transformations would lead to the late Deva Realm, with the tenth and eleventh transformations being legendary in nature, and very difficult to cultivate. However, because of how Bai Xiaochun had combined it with the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation, he was easily able to master it.

Now, if he wanted to achieve his breakthrough, he needed to succeed with the final transformation!

When he did, a blazing sun would appear in his right eye, which would be the perfect foil to the bright moon in his left eye. That would be the ultimate manifestation of the power of the Cloud Lightning Forefather.

Because it was a combination with the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation, it varied somewhat from Master Cloud Lightning's version. However, it still surpassed the limits of the technique, and would even be shocking to the person who had originally invented it.

"Cloud Lightning...." Bai Xiaochun murmured, his eyes glittering as the fire rushed toward him.

"Forefather...." Rumbling sounds filled the world of the magical item as Bai Xiaochun trembled, breathed in ragged pants as his cultivation base surged. Suddenly, his right eye turned into something like a black hole that sucked in all of the surrounding flames.

Moments later, the fire region had no flame at all within it!

"Eleventh Transformation!!"

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!!

The world shook violently as his right eye brew brighter and brighter until the image of a sun appeared. At the same time, his cultivation base skyrocketed, breaking through into... the great circle of the Deva Realm!

Bai Xiaochun's energy rose to incredible heights, shaking the world, causing the ghost face to tremble, causing the lands to quake, and causing the sky to distort. As all of that happened, a face appeared up above.

It was not Bai Xiaochun's face, but rather... the baby girl's!

Her eyes were closed, as though this were a critical moment in her journey to becoming the spirit automaton.

Bai Xiaochun rose to his feet, ignoring the baby girl and instead lifting his right hand. Upon clenching it, cracking sounds erupted out, and he felt his blood surging through his body. At the same time, he began to glow with crimson light, as though he had become some sort of blood divinity!

An indescribable pressure began to weigh down around him, crushing everything in the area. If any disciple from the Blood Stream Division had been here to see him, they would have been shaken to the core, and would have been convinced that they were looking at... their Blood Ancestor!

“Undying Blood... eighty percent complete!”

Chapter 989: Grim Circumstances

The war between the Heavenspan region and the Wildlands continued to intensify. At this point, nearly seventy percent of the cultivators from the four rivers had been deployed.

Such a large number of cultivators ensured that the four enormous armies were like sharp arrows that could pierce anything that stood in their way. They stabbed deep into the Wildlands, crushing everything in their path. The Wildlands had been at a disadvantage from the beginning, and now they were being defeated at every turn!

Not even the participation of the four heavenly kings could change the overall tide of the war. As the demigod patriarchs from the four riversource sects bombarded them with divine abilities, they were forced to cede more and more territory. The front line began to shrink as the Wildlands forces fell back, both to buy some breathing room and to look for a chance to strike back.

As the riversource sects advanced from both east, west, south and north, they occupied more than thirty percent of the Wildlands, and essentially had the Wildlanders surrounded!

From then on, the war involved tightening the encirclement, and marching onward toward what would be the final battle!

The fighting in this war was far more bitter than in any war of the past. Normally, things would never have reached this level. However, the Celestial was dead set on this outcome, and gave the four riversource sects no other option than to fight with all the power they could muster.

Another factor that played into the situation was that the gravekeeper was old and weak, and could not protect the Wildlands like he had in the past. And the new Hell-Emperor had not yet fully matured in his role, and could only act passively.

Considering everything, it was only natural that the fighting would be more desperate than it ever had been in previous conflicts.

As the Wildlands ceded more territory, conflicts between devas became more common, and more casualties resulted.

By this point, more than ten devas had been killed collectively. Furthermore, the fighting between the demigods had escalated to a deadly nature. Although no demigods had perished as of yet, it probably wouldn't be long before that happened!

The casualties were especially high among the Wildlanders. Entire tribes of savage giants had been wiped out, leaving vast swaths of the Wildlands littered with corpses and the vestiges of war.

The armies of the four heavenly kings had not fared well either. They were exhausted, and yet, gritted their teeth and fought on. It seemed clear that this war would only end with one side being completely wiped out!

There would be no surrender. There would be no mercy. There was only one outcome for the loser: death!

That was the ultimatum the Celestial had given to the gravekeeper!

Either open the Worldgate, or... watch the bloodline of the Arch-Emperor be destroyed, along with every Wildlander cultivator!

At the same time, countless chosen rose to prominence in the Wildlands. Gongsun Yi. Zhou Hong. Chen Manyao. Xu Shan. They all experienced baptisms by blood and fire, and by means of such deadly situations, grew into true men and women.

It was the same with Mistress Red-Dust, who led the Giant Ghost Legion in a spectacular campaign to resist the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. All of the other three riversource sects were completely shaken by the results of that fighting.

Of course, heroes rose up among the Heavenspan sects as well, people who accomplished amazing deeds and inspired their fellow cultivators.

It was almost as if... the entire world were a withered flower that, by means of destruction, used its last bit of energy to bloom in radiant glory.

Devas. Nascent Soul cultivators. Core Formation experts. It was the same with all of them!

In the River-Defying Sect, it happened with Song Que, Shangguan Tianyou, Xu Baocai, and their deva, Patriarch Spirit Stream.

People died every day, until the Wildlands ran red with blood!

**

In one particular valley in the Giant Ghost King's territory, the Wildlanders were fighting a coalition of great sects from the Middle Reaches. Patriarch Spirit Stream was there, as well as Song Junwan and Bruiser.

The River-Defying Sect cultivators weren't particularly enthusiastic about this war, nor were the Wildlanders from the Giant Ghost Legion. Although neither of them were very interested in fighting to the death, they had no choice in the matter....

After all, the Heavenspan forces were being led by Bai Zhentian from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

At the moment, his eyes were bloodshot from anxiety. Although the Heavenspan forces had the advantage, and were winning the war in general, there were often isolated incidents in which the Wildlanders would catch them by surprise and inflict heavy casualties.

And that was exactly what was playing out right now. The Giant Ghost Legion had lain in wait in this valley, and managed to surround the Heavenspan cultivators, who were unable to

extricate themselves.

On one side of the valley, the exhausted Mistress Red-Dust stood looking at the Heavenspan cultivators, mixed emotions in her eyes. Throughout the course of the war, she had done her best to avoid fighting cultivators from the River-Defying Sect. But as the fighting ground on and on, that became more and more difficult.

Flanking Mistress Red-Dust were numerous cultivators from the Giant Ghost Legion, whose eyes were blood red as they stared into the valley. All it would take was a single command from Mistress Red-Dust, and they would attack with deadly force.

Also among the Wildlands forces were cultivators from Arch-Emperor City, including several heavenly marquises and two heavenly dukes. Although they technically outranked Mistress Red-Dust, during times of war, they would usually abide by the orders of the army leaders.

Mistress Red-Dust could sense that everyone around her was itching to fight, and that the lives of the people within the valley were essentially in her hands. She closed her eyes for a long moment. After taking a deep breath, she opened them again.

“Kill them, but... spare as many as you can from the River-Defying Sect.” This was her first time openly stating that the River-Defying Sect cultivators should not be killed. Her words caused an almost immediate uproar.

It was one of the heavenly marquises from Arch-Emperor City that spoke up the loudest. “Fellow Daoist Zimo, I don’t know why you favor the River-Defying Sect, but I can tell you that if we hold back, they won’t be the only ones who’ll escape!”

As for the other heavenly marquises, they frowned and looked over at Mistress Red-Dust.

Only the heavenly duke seemed to have already guessed what she was thinking.

Eyes blazing, Mistress Red-Dust coolly said, “Bai Xiaochun comes from the River-Defying Sect! If you don't care about pissing him off, then go ahead and kill his people!”

“Bai... Bai Xiaochun!?!?” The instant that heavenly marquis heard the name ‘Bai Xiaochun’, he shivered visibly, and even gasped. By this point, it was no big secret that Bai Xiaochun had masqueraded as Bai Hao in the past.

The other heavenly marquises were similarly shaken, and thought back to all of the things that had occurred when Bai Xiaochun was in Arch-Emperor City. Some of them had even come close to experiencing the shakedowns. All of them had nearly worshipped him back in the old days, and of course, they all knew that he was the Master of the Hell-Emperor....

After exchanging glances, the heavenly marquises smiled bitterly, but held their tongues. And when the fighting started... they heeded Mistress Red-Dust’s orders.

The truth was that similar scenes would begin to play out in other locations in the Wildlands.

Eventually, the fighting in the valley was over. Under the leadership of Patriarch Spirit Stream, the River-Defying Sect cultivators escaped off into the distance. Mistress Red-Dust quietly watched them go.

“Where are you, Bai Xiaochun?” she murmured. “Why are you doing this...?” Sighing, she turned and left.

In that very moment, Bai Xiaochun was back in the world of the magical item, his Undying Blood having just reached the eighty percent level. His cultivation base was now in the great circle of the Deva Realm, and the entire world around him was shaking.

His aura now surpassed that of an ordinary cultivator in the great circle. For example, Chen Haosong couldn’t possibly measure up to him now, not any more than a firefly could compare to the full

moon!

“I wonder what's going on in the outside world...?” he thought, taking a deep breath. Now that the fire region was empty, and there was no more spiritual energy around him, he wished more than ever that he could leave soon.

Looking up at the face of the baby girl overhead, he sent out some divine sense and confirmed that at the most... it would take three more days before the fusion process was complete!

“Three days, huh...?” Eyes flashing he looked off into the distance... to where the ghost face was hiding.

“The old ghost is weak now, but once he gets out of here, his cultivation base will go back to normal.... Right now, he has a lot of life force left. It sure would be a pity to let it go to waste.

“I wonder... if I could use his life force to push my Undying Blood to an even higher level. Perhaps one hundred percent...? At that point, I would be in full control of the Godkiller technique!” Having reached this point in his train of thought, he smacked his bag of holding to produce his Eternal Parasol. Then, he began to walk toward the ghost face.

Chapter 990: Hang In There....

The ghost face lay in his hiding spot, staring blankly into the sky at the face of the baby girl. After a moment passed, he sighed, his heart filled with both bitterness and excitement. “So, the detestable Bai Xiaochun finally broke through....”

It had not been an easy thing to endure through all of these years of torment. But now that Bai Xiaochun had broken through, and the spiritual energy from the four regions in the world was depleted, the ghost face was certain that a critical moment had arrived.

“That soul is about to become the spirit automaton.... When that happens, that damned Bai Xiaochun is definitely going to have the automaton open the world....” The ghost face’s expression was one of excitement and anticipation. After all, he knew that once he was free and in the open, his cultivation base would return to normal.

When that happened, he would finally be able to make Bai Xiaochun regret his own existence.

Right now, he needed to do everything in his power to make Bai Xiaochun believe that he was so harmless he wouldn’t even be threatening to a fly. In fact, he even hoped that he could get Bai Xiaochun to come try to capture him. If that happened, he would cooperate fully, all because of his confidence that his secret magic would enable him to escape later.

“However, I can’t place all my hopes in that damned Bai Xiaochun. If he’s a complete waste of brains that can’t see my value, and doesn’t plan to capture me, well... I’m still not afraid!” A cold gleam flickered deep within the ghost face’s eyes. The truth was that he had been preparing for his moment for two years already.

Although his cultivation base had been suppressed all the way down to the Nascent Soul level, he had still managed to build up a

reserve of divine soul power that he could use in one powerful attack.

It was an attack based, not on battle prowess, but on the power of teleportation. It would cost him nearly half of his divine soul, but in a situation in which Bai Xiaochun didn't try to capture him, he could use it to break out into the open on his own!

“Two plans. Whichever I go with, I'll succeed for sure, and restore my cultivation base! You just wait, Bai Xiaochun!!” Even as his heart surged with excitement, his expression flickered.

“He's coming!” he gasped. Bai Xiaochun's terrifying aura was now closing in at top speed! He quickly suppressed his trembles of excitement and plastered a blank look on his face as he stared up into the sky. Anyone who looked at him would think that his expression was one of dazed despair. However, his heart was alive with the utmost levels of caution and prudence.

Before long, heaven and earth trembled, and even the air distorted as Bai Xiaochun appeared. He stopped above the ghost face, hovering in the air, a proud expression on his face as he flicked his sleeve.

“There's something I need your help with, you rascally ghost.”

The ghost face's heart twitched at being called a 'rascally ghost', but he didn't dare to let that show on the outside. Trying to look as dazed as possible, he continued to stare blankly up into the sky.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that the ghost face didn't seem to have any intention of responding, he cleared his throat and then resorted to a more threatening glare.

“Look at me, you rascally ghost!” he growled, unleashing some cultivation base fluctuations of the great circle of the Deva Realm. Instantly, wild colors flashed in the sky as Bai Xiaochun's will filled the entire area.

His will was so strong it affected the whole world of the magical

item, making it seem as if his every thought and action was backed by magical law! His gaze was the gaze of heaven, and the pressure weighing down from him was heavenly might!!

In fact, he seemed like the very personification of all heaven and earth!

He also glowed with glorious light that almost seemed to clothe him as he hovered there in the air, spectacular in every aspect.

Although many ordinary people would not be able to see the evidence, and would only be awed by his general appearance, the ghost face could see more deeply....

“Deva Shapes Heavenly Will.... World Raiment....” The ghost face shivered. After all, Deva Shapes Heavenly Will was the ultimate expression of the Deva Realm, and indicated that the cultivator in question truly had merged with heaven and earth. That cultivator’s will had become the will of the heavens, and his very thoughts were the thoughts of all creation.

“This damned Bai Xiaochun does have some shocking talent. Not every deva reaches Deva Shapes Heavenly Will, nor are many capable of summoning the World Raiment.... That usually appears only when someone is about to step into the Demigod Realm.” The ghost face was feeling quite torn. After all, the only thing that lay beyond Deva Shapes Heavenly Will was the Demigod Realm!

In the Deva Realm, a cultivator would merge his will with heaven and earth, borrowing the power of creation to accomplish what they wished. But demigods... opened up a world of their own. When their spiritual soul became a true divine soul, their demigod will could outshine heaven and earth, and in fact, could even suppress them!

When Bai Xiaochun noticed that faint glimmer of shock in the ghost face’s eyes, he felt quite pleased with himself. It was a wonderful thing to be so eye-catching, especially when the person looking at him was capable of fighting the Celestial, and also

wanted to kill him.

There was a flicker of motion, and Bai Xiaochun appeared next to the ghost face. Suddenly, it was possible to see the dark glow of the Eternal Parasol in his hand.

“I'm lacking a bit of life force for my cultivation. You, a mighty quasi-archaeon, would likely have a lot of life force. Mind lending me a bit? Although, I guess it's not like you can refuse, right?” Licking his lips, he stabbed the Eternal Parasol toward the shivering ghost face.

The ghost face wanted to fight back, but knew that it wouldn't do any good. Furthermore, considering that the entrance to the magical item would be opening soon, he gritted his figurative teeth and focused on his anticipation of future revenge. Slowly and calmly, he closed his eyes.

“Just hang in there... for three more days. I lasted for two years already. Only three more days!”

However, the ghost face vastly underestimated the power of the Eternal Parasol to drain life force. As soon as it entered his body, a massive gravitational force erupted from inside the parasol.

The ghost face's eyes snapped open and shone with disbelief as a scream escaped his lips. At the same time, his life force began to charge into the Eternal Parasol as rapidly as a wild mustang.

Within only a few breaths of time, a full two percent of his total life force was gone. It was so startling that his immediate reaction was to start struggling. However, after reminding himself that it would only be three days until the spirit automaton woke up, he held back.

“I have to hang in there!!”

When Bai Xiaochun realized how much life force was flowing into him through the Eternal Parasol, his eyes began to shine brightly. Although he had known that the ghost face would have

exceptional life force, it definitely surpassed his expectations.

Immediately, his Undying Blood, which was currently roughly eighty percent complete, began to seethe madly.

“This guy is basically a huge Life Force Pill. Maybe I should just consume him like an actual medicinal pill....” Heart pounding, he shoved the Eternal Parasol in a bit deeper, causing the life force to flow even more freely. Meanwhile, the ghost howled inwardly as a full ten percent of his life force faded away.

Terrified, he was about to start struggling when he noticed the look in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes, and shivered.

“He’s gonna gobble me up!! Heavens! Why is he doing this!? Dammit! Go eat someone else, why don’t you?!?! I... I have to just hang in there!!” The ghost face was scared out of his mind, but thankfully for him, Bai Xiaochun had come to the conclusion that consuming the ghost face like a pill would be too dangerous.

Sadly for the ghost face, Bai Xiaochun’s facial expression didn’t match his decision, causing the ghost to hover on the brink of complete mental collapse.

Time passed. Soon, forty percent of the ghost face’s life force had been absorbed by Bai Xiaochun. The ghost face’s divine soul was already showing signs of instability and withering. On several occasions, he considered putting up a fight, but the look in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes scared him too much.

After reaching the forty percent point, Bai Xiaochun took a break. Extracting the Eternal Parasol, he went off to find a suitable location to do some meditation, and properly utilize all the life force.

At that point, the ghost face sighed with relief. Looking around bitterly at the world, he focused on his anticipation of the end of the three-day period....

“Bai! Xiao! Chun! Just wait until I get out of here! I’ll definitely

take back all of that life force, with interest! I can't believe you want to eat me! Are you even human!? I'm gonna eat you!!”

Chapter 991: Demigod Fleshly Body!

Even as the ghost face cursed inwardly, Bai Xiaochun sat there cross-legged in meditation, continuously absorbing the explosive life force into his bloodstream, fueling the growth of his Undying Blood.

Gradually, his Undying Blood neared the ninety percent level.... Then, the following morning, his eyes snapped open.

A blood-colored light gleamed therein, and cracking sounds emanated out from inside of him. At the same time, he radiated an intense energy.

The air around him rippled and distorted, seemingly incapable of withstanding the force, and even the world as a whole trembled.

“Ninety percent!!” Bai Xiaochun’s eyes shone with exuberant delight as he slowly rose to his feet. Because of his progress with his Undying Blood, he could tell that although his blood was still red, his bones were almost completely golden.

According to the description in the Undying Codex, he would reach a point where heaven and earth could be destroyed, but his body could not. As of this moment, he could clearly sense that, not only was his fleshly body powerful to an extreme degree, his regenerative capabilities were astonishing beyond description.

“Unless someone was able to kill me in one shot... I can basically recover from any injury, given enough time! Heavens, so much power....” His heart was already racing with the thought of having one hundred percent Undying Blood in his veins.

“If I’m this strong at ninety percent, I wonder what the great circle of Undying Blood will be like...?” Brimming with excitement, he flew back over to the ghost face.

The ghost face had assumed that the nightmare was over, and had been cursing Bai Xiaochun ever since, and simultaneously

swearing oaths of revenge. However, when he saw Bai Xiaochun approaching, his expression flickered dramatically. Then he saw the Eternal Parasol, and his madness transformed into bitter despair....

“Noooo....”

Rumbling sounds echoed out as the Eternal Parasol stabbed into the ghost face, who screamed unceasingly as his life force began to flow out of him. There was nothing he could do to fight back, and as the process continued, his divine soul continued to fade.

On the first day, he had vowed to hang in there. But this time, he couldn't hang in any longer. Sadly, despite how he tried to struggle, the only thing he could do was scream.

“I hate you, Bai Xiaochun....”

“I was wrong, Lord Bai! I was truly in the wrong....”

“No, it hurts....”

Glaring, Bai Xiaochun bopped the ghost face on the top of his head.

“Calm down! What are you shrieking for!? You were fine yesterday, weren't you? It's just a bit of life force. Once you get used to it, you won't even notice.” The ghost face hollered until he ran out of energy, whereupon he lay there twitching, filled with more grief than could fit into the Heavenspan Sea....

Yet again, he deeply regretted leaving Ghostmother. He regretted letting the Celestial grab him, and regretted delivering himself up to Bai Xiaochun....

“Why is my life so horrible!?!?!? And how can this heaven-damned Bai Xiaochun be so merciless...?” The ghost face's heart now had enough tears built up to flood the world with torrential downpours....

“I swear, with my last bit of life, with all of my cultivation base,

with all of my being, that if I get out of here, then I'll slowly slice Bai Xiaochun into pieces. I'll torture him for 10,000 years!!" At some unknown point, the ghost face eventually just passed out.

When he woke up, Bai Xiaochun was gone. The ghost face examined himself, and was shocked to find that he was almost completely empty. He only had about ten percent of his original reserve of life force left.

In the first session, Bai Xiaochun had only taken about ten percent. But in the following two days, he took a full eighty percent. The ghost was simply floored.

His divine soul seemed like it might shatter at any moment, as though it had been trampled underfoot by millions of soldiers.

"Merciless people like him should be killed at birth!!!!!" the ghost face howled.

The truth was that the ghost face wasn't quite looking at the situation properly. After he passed out, Bai Xiaochun could easily have just taken all of his life force. But Bai Xiaochun couldn't bring himself to do something that heartless, and had left him with ten percent.

"Well, I've tormented the old man quite a bit over the past two years," Bai Xiaochun had said. "I guess I should show a bit of compassion. Ah, whatever. I'll let him recover a bit, and then take some more later." Sighing at how kind he was, he had left to meditate and push his Undying Blood to the great circle.

After absorbing enough life force, his Undying Blood experienced explosive advancement. At long last, the last drop of blood inside of him became Undying Blood, and his entire body filled with intense rumbling sounds.

Undying Blood! One hundred percent!!

Stabbing pain filled every corner of his being, causing his eyes to widen and turn completely bloodshot.

Cracking sounds emanated out from him until it almost looked like his skin was being ripped apart. Underneath the ripped skin, it was actually possible to see his blood flowing in his veins.

His bones, his energy passageways, and everything else about him began to transform, almost as if he were acquiring a brand new body.

After about ten breaths of time passed, the pain grew so intense that he threw his head back and howled. A moment later, his entire body seemed to wither up, and then, explode!

What exploded was merely the surface, though. As the bits flew out in all directions, a brand new Bai Xiaochun was revealed beneath. He was sparkling and almost translucent, like a piece of fine jade. However, the process wasn't over! He withered again, and then exploded.

Then the process happened a third time, a fourth time, and a fifth time....

Eight times in a row, he withered and then exploded. By that point, he shone with blinding light, and seemed something completely out of the ordinary. If anyone had been able to lay eyes on him in that moment, they would have been completely shocked.

He was clearly not a mortal, and in fact, had surpassed a fleshly body limit for cultivators!

“Demigod... fleshly body!!” he murmured, slowly looking up. His eyes shone like the sun and moon, making him look like a god descended onto the world!

“That means, there's still one more step....” Eye shining with anticipation, he cast his senses inward... to detect the fifth shackle of the human body, like an enormous mountain weighing down on him.

“After all these years, I've finally cultivated the Undying Codex...

all the way to the great circle!” He threw his hands up into the air, causing his blood, his bones, his tendons, his flesh, and his skin to all thrum with terrifying, explosive power.

His energy surged like angry waves of the sea, causing heaven and earth to suddenly grow dim in response!

Then he spoke, his voice echoing like heavenly thunder.

“Fifth shackle: break!!”

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!!

The massive, mountainous weight on his shoulders suddenly shattered into pieces, causing the entire world of the magical item to shake violently. Yet again, cracks spread out over his skin, and he withered rapidly. Then, he exploded for a ninth time!

When he reappeared, he had the most perfect of perfect bodies.

“What aura is that?!?!” the ghost face cried in alarm.

In that exact same moment, the face of the baby girl up in the sky opened her eyes and looked over at Bai Xiaochun in shock, apparently recalling complex memories of the past....

His breakthrough in the Undying Codex even affected the outside world. The sky in the north transformed into an enormous vortex which caused all of the lands of Heavenspan to tremble!

Out in the Wildlands, both opposing armies could sense the drastic transformations, and looked over to see massive rifts spreading out in the sky from the north!

It almost looked like the sky was about to shatter!!

Chapter 992: Returning To The Ice Plains

Even the earth seemed like it was about to crack into pieces!

On numerous battlefields throughout the lands, cultivators from the Wildlands and the Heavenspan region all looked around, all of them equally shaken by the premonition that the world was about to be torn apart.

“What’s going on?!?!”

“Heavens! Why is the sky crumbling?!?!”

Core Formation cultivators, Nascent Soul experts, and even devas were shaken. Many from the River-Defying Sect were included. Demigod experts from both sides gasped in open shock.

Mistress Red-Dust was caught completely unprepared. She, like most other Wildlanders, assumed that the Celestial was responsible.

Only a handful of people knew the truth. For example, in Arch-Emperor City, deep within the third part of the city that was buried underneath the ground, in a crumbling pagoda, was the gravekeeper. As he sat there cross-legged, he opened his weary eyes.

He looked particularly old, and fairly radiated an aura of decay. By now, he was like an oil lamp on the verge of winking out, his eyes cloudy as he slowly raised his head skyward.

“The Undying Codex... mastered.... I think I know what the Celestial plans to do. Bai Xiaochun, I hope that in the end... you don’t hate me.... There’s nothing else I can do.... This is my mission, the entire point of my existence....”

In the illusory Underworld River was the reigning Hell-Emperor, Bai Hao. As he stood there looking out on heaven and earth, he murmured, “Master....”

In addition to those two, there was another person who understood what was happening. He was... the reigning Arch-Emperor!

Although he had been made little more than a puppet by the Grand Heavenmaster, he was still the Arch-Emperor. The blood of the imperial clan ran in his veins, and as he sat there on the Dragon Throne in the imperial palace, he shivered.

It was a reaction that came from sensing someone else who cultivated the same technique as him. It came from his blood, and even his soul. After all, the Arch-Emperors also cultivated the Undying Live Forever Technique!

“Someone... has succeeded the Blood Ancestor, and reached the great circle of the Undying Codex!” The despair that had filled the Arch-Emperor’s eyes was suddenly replaced with hope.

Those three were the only ones in the Wildlands who knew the truth of what was happening. When it came to the forces from the Heavenspan Region, as the sky seemed to crumble, a shocking aura erupted out from Heavenspan Island.

“The great circle of the Undying Codex....” The Celestial rose to his feet within the Palace of the Dao. Throwing his head back, he laughed uproariously. At the same time, tears began to stream down his cheeks, and they were not tears of joy. However, the determination in his eyes did not fade.

“The strategy I didn’t wish to employ is playing out perfectly.... Is it destiny, gravekeeper...?”

In the sect headquarters of the River-Defying Sect, the enormous Blood Ancestor shivered imperceptibly. Had Bai Xiaochun been there, he would have been able to hear a voice speaking that almost seemed to be an illusion.

“I held my breath yesterday, to awaken today!”

The world shook for what seemed like a never-ending moment.

As for Bai Xiaochun, he took a deep breath as he rose to his feet, the fragments of his old self crumbling off of him. The magical item around him trembled violently, as though it were trying to keep him in check, an instinctual response of the world itself, and the will of the baby girl.

“The great circle of the Deva Realm.... I've mastered the Undying Codex....” Bai Xiaochun closed his eyes to feel the boundless life force flowing within him. After a moment, he opened his eyes, which shone with the only color that existed in the world around him.

“Time to go home....” he said softly. He looked up at the face of the baby girl, and met her gaze. He didn't say anything. Everything that needed to be said was visible in his eyes.

At this point, Bai Xiaochun didn't care if she had some other plans that she hadn't explained to him. With his cultivation base and shocking fleshly body power, he was fairly certain that he could handle her if necessary.

Mixed emotions could be seen in the eyes of the baby girl as she quietly said, “Congratulations.... The great circle of the Undying Codex.... I will abide by our agreement for the rest of my life. You may use the magical item of the north three times. If you can kill the Celestial, then you will be my master for all time!”

The baby girl didn't waste any more time. Her eyes began to shine with mysterious light, causing the entire magical item to tremble. The lands cracked as a huge stone gate suddenly rose up from nowhere!

As the majestic stone gate rose up, the world around it crumbled away into emptiness, until nothing existed except for the gate!

“From here,” the baby girl said slowly, “you can return to the northern ice plains!”

Bai Xiaochun looked at the gate, his eyes shining with

anticipation. He had been waiting for this moment for a long time. At the moment, he felt more than a little nervous about what the world outside might be like, considering how much time had passed.

“I wonder how the River-Defying Sect is doing...?” With that, he blurred into motion, heading directly toward the stone gate.

As for the ghost face, he was weak and nervous, but at the same time, excited. As the world collapsed around him, he fixed his gaze on the gate and began to fly toward it, more focused on escaping than the Celestial was focused on escaping the lands of Heavenspan.

However, because of all the life force which had been drained from him, he was very weak, and could no longer use the teleportation secret magic he had prepared. If he did... he would destroy himself in the process.

“Take me with you!!” he wailed. “You can put any restrictive spells on me that you want. I’ll... I’ll be your ghost slave! Once my cultivation base is back, that would mean you had a quasi-celestial ghost slave at your command!!”

In response, Bai Xiaochun stopped in place and looked back at the ghost face. He had considered this possibility before, but had abandoned the idea. After all, he wasn’t completely confident in using such methods of enslavement.

Without the magical item to suppress the ghost face’s cultivation base, there was no saying what he could do. And Bai Xiaochun didn’t want to put himself face-to-face with one of the most powerful enemies in the world.

After some more consideration, he simply turned and continued on toward the gate.

“Take me with you, Bai Xiaochun!!” the ghost face shrieked anxiously. He tried to fly forward, but the world of the magical

item suppressed him. The baby girl looked at him, and he suddenly felt as if he were about to be crushed. There was no way for him to even move. All he could do was watch wide-eyed as Bai Xiaochun slowly approached the gate.

“Bai Xiaochun!!” he shrieked.

“Shut up!” Bai Xiaochun said with a frown, turning to look at the ghost face. “I’ll never trust you, no matter what you say. Just wait here. After I’m a demigod, then I’ll let you out.”

“You... you....” The ghost face felt like he was about to collapse mentally. After all of the hanging in there, all with the goal of escaping, he was now having his hopes dashed to pieces. Considering the determination he saw in Bai Xiaochun’s eyes, he knew that there was no hope left.

“Heaven damn you, Bai Xiaochun! Curse you!!”

Bai Xiaochun sighed loftily, musing to himself that only a fool would trust anything the ghost face said.

Now that he had achieved his cultivation base breakthrough, and was in the great circle of the Deva Realm, with a demigod fleshly body, he couldn’t have been in higher spirits.

“I could crush you to death with a single slap of my palm, Chen Hetian! And I’m not afraid of any of you northerners anymore either. Not even your demigod!” Filled with excitement at the thought of how shocked everyone would be to see him, he stepped forward into the stone gate.

Instantly, the gate began to emit rumbling sounds, and then, he vanished.

When he reappeared, he was back on the plains of the north. A warm breeze suddenly touched him, not anything like a heatwave, but enough to be considered pleasant.

He could immediately sense the spiritual energy of the Heavenspan Sea, which was a wonderful feeling.

“Hold on, I should be in the north.... How come the wind isn’t cold?” When he examined his surroundings further, his eyes nearly popped out of his head.

“Did the Frigid Matriarch send me to the wrong place? Is this... really the north?” He found himself looking around at a jungle filled with lush vegetation....

Furthermore, visible throughout the greenery were countless little moonflowers. Bai Xiaochun’s expression flickered.

“Moonflower, baby....”

Chapter 993: Anxious!!

After flying along for a bit in somewhat of a daze, he confirmed... that he really was in the north. During the few short years which had passed, the north had changed so much that it was almost like a dream....

Roughly eighty percent of the north... no longer had any ice plains. Instead, it was covered with rich soil and... a dense jungle.

The entire jungle was actually made of... moonflowers.

Beads of sweat now covered Bai Xiaochun's forehead as he realized the enormity of what he had done so many years ago.... Although he had known that the moonflower was powerful, he could never have imagined that in a few short years, it would occupy the entire northern Heavenspan River region.

What was even more strange was that the northerners had apparently just let the moonflowers grow freely, and hadn't cleared them away....

Of course, he had no way of knowing that the northerners had tried many times to do just that. But nothing did any good. Furthermore, as war loomed, the northern demigod and devas eventually didn't have time to worry about moonflowers. All of their thoughts had been occupied with the upcoming invasion of the Wildlands.

Who could ever have guessed how dramatically the moonflowers would grow in only a few years? Perhaps if action had been taken early on, the northerners might have been able to do something about it. But the matter of the war made that impossible.

Bai Xiaochun was completely shaken. He proceeded along for a while until he caught sight of the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect.... The changes there weren't as dramatic as elsewhere. The sect was still surrounded by plains of ice; apparently, it was the

only location in the north that still remained that way.

However, the sect was surrounded by countless moonflowers. As for the two ice statues that formed the sect headquarters, they were significantly melted. It was no longer possible to make out their facial features, and they looked like little more than columns of ice....

Bai Xiaochun already felt a bit guilty. Unfortunately, it wouldn't be very convenient to return to the River-Defying Sect without using the teleportation portal in the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect. Bracing himself, he continued onward.

As he neared, it was to his surprise that he couldn't sense a single deva in the sect. Neither was the demigod present. In fact, nearly eighty percent of the cultivators were apparently gone....

Most of those left behind were Foundation Establishment cultivators and Qi Condensation disciples.... Because of how few cultivators were present, it made the enormous, mighty sect seem somewhat like a wasteland.

If that were all there were to it, it might not be a big deal. However, virtually all of the scattered cultivators who remained in the sect seemed very unsettled, and were sighing constantly.

Bai Xiaochun's heart began to pound with a very ill premonition. Without the slightest hesitation, he sped toward the sect. As he neared, the sect's grand spell formation activated to prevent him from getting too close. At the same time, a sound like an echoing alarm claxon filled the entire sect.

Of course, a huge commotion ensued

“What's going on?!?!”

“The enemy is attacking!!”

Although the sect's defensive spell formation was powerful, to Bai Xiaochun's Undying Hex, it posed little obstacle. In fact, he didn't even slow down, and a moment later, was in the middle of

the sect.

Countless terrified gazes locked onto him, and soon, people recognized who he was, leading to shouts of alarm.

“It’s Bai Xiaochun!!”

“Heavens! What is he doing back? I thought he was missing!?!?”

“Dammit! The demigod patriarch and the devas are all on the battlefield, and now Bai Xiaochun shows up here with killing intent?! What’s he planning to do?!?!”

The buzz in the sect caused Bai Xiaochun’s uneasy feeling to grow stronger. Looking around at the panic, he shouted, “All of you shut the hell up!!”

His voice roared through the sect like heavenly thunder, a deafening sound which instantly silenced all of the clamor.

Pointing urgently at one of the cultivators who was in the great circle of Foundation Establishment, he said, “Tell me immediately why there are so few of you here! Where is Master Cloud Lightning? Where’s the demigod patriarch? Where did everyone go?!”

The cultivator trembled in fear, but immediately clasped hands and bowed in formal fashion. Not daring to hold anything back, he quickly began to provide an explanation.

“The four riversource sects have gone to war with the Wildlands. Everyone else... is in the Wildlands, fighting....”

“WHAT?!?!” Bai Xiaochun shouted, so completely thunderstruck that he didn’t even wait for any further explanation. All of a sudden, his mind was overwhelmed by the thought... of the Wildlands and the Heavenspan region at war!!

Everyone else here was used to the fact that the war had been going on for years now. But this was Bai Xiaochun’s first time hearing about it, and the news immediately caused him to feel very

nervous. He thought about his apprentice Bai Hao, the Giant Ghost King, and Mistress Red-Dust. There was no time to waste here in the north. He immediately began to hurry toward the teleportation portal.

Of course, he was already famous in the Nine Heavens Cloud Lightning Sect. The disciples viewed him as some sort of demonic god of pestilence. Therefore, they did everything they could to activate the teleportation portal as quickly as possible. Only after the light began to fade away along with Bai Xiaochun did they breathe sighs of relief.

The teleportation portals in the riversource sects could send people all the way across the Heavenspan Sea to the other riversource sects. Therefore, it only took a short moment for Bai Xiaochun to go from the north to the east, and arrive... in the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's teleportation portal was located on the blue rainbow. As soon as it began to shine with light, the disciples manning the portal were shaken, and looked over to see who it was that was arriving.

Xu Baocai was sitting there cross-legged within the group. His cultivation base was high enough to join in the war effort, but he had been seriously injured and sent back to the sect for rest and recovery. However, he knew that it wouldn't be long before he was sent back to the battlefield.

By this point in the war, he was already weary of all the fighting. He had seen many people die, to the point where any fear in him had burned away, replaced by simple exhaustion.

His injuries had been severe, and were it not for the fact that his opponent had recognized him as being from the River-Defying Sect, and thus held back, he would likely have died.

Despite being shown mercy, Xu Baocai's cultivation base had been severely damaged, sending him all the way back down to the

Foundation Establishment level. Although he had recovered some since then, it seemed unlikely that he would ever return to his previous level.

That realization filled Xu Baocai with grief. He also wondered how much longer the war would go on. It had already been years now, and both sides had suffered casualties.

From what he could tell, the next time he went to the battlefield might be his last. Perhaps he would never return to the east, and would end up dead and buried far from home....

When the teleportation portal began to light up, Xu Baocai noticed, but didn't pay much attention. After glancing over, he looked away.

Before anyone could even see who was teleporting in, a terrifying pressure filled the air. Divine sense swept out from the teleportation portal in all directions, filling the entire Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect.

It was a divine sense so powerful that nothing in the entire sect could be hidden from it.

Everyone began to tremble where they stood, and Xu Baocai even gasped. He had encountered divine sense like this before on the battlefield, and was certain that this was someone who surpassed a deva. It could only be a demigod patriarch!

"The demigod is back?" Even before Xu Baocai could do anything, a familiar voice entered his ears.

"Xu Baocai?"

"Huh?" Xu Baocai replied, jaw dropping. His mind almost immediately went blank as the air rippled, and Bai Xiaochun stepped out into the open.

Xu Baocai stared in complete shock, unable to do anything as Bai Xiaochun walked up to him. Bai Xiaochun frowned and waved his hand, sending warm energy into Xu Baocai. A moment later,

cracking sounds could be heard as Xu Baocai's injuries were all healed.

When Xu Baocai felt the warmth inside of him, and sensed the fluctuations of his cultivation base, the despair he had felt for so long vanished. His eyes brightened as he rapidly rose back into the Core Formation stage... prompting him to shout, “Bai Xiaochun...? Junior Patriarch!!”

Chapter 994: I Can Definitely Stop This....

The last time the River-Defying Sect had heard from Bai Xiaochun, he had sent a message about staying in the north with Du Lingfei. After that... they heard nothing.

Then the war broke out, with casualties mounting on both sides. Eventually, no one in the River-Defying Sect had the time or energy to worry about Bai Xiaochun. As the days wore on, the only thing that occupied their thoughts was the fighting!

It was the same with Xu Baocai. Only occasionally would he think about the spectacular junior patriarch of the sect. They had met each other as rivals for a spot in the Ovens, which was when Xu Baocai had written a blood notice and furiously delivered it to Bai Xiaochun....

Destiny was usually impossible to fight against. That was something that Xu Baocai had come to sigh about quite often, especially after being injured in the war.

As of this moment, however, all such sighs were driven away, replaced by utter astonishment. Not only were his injuries completely healed, but he was now standing right in front of the missing Bai Xiaochun!

Especially noteworthy was Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base fluctuations. To Xu Baocai's astonishment, Bai Xiaochun was even more powerful than he had been in the past.

Although he couldn't assess the level of his cultivation base, there was something profound about it that Xu Baocai had only sensed in demigods before.

“Junior Patriarch... you....” Xu Baocai's mind was so blank that he couldn't even speak.

“What happened while I was gone?” Bai Xiaochun asked urgently. “Where did everybody go? And... how are they?!?!”

From the bloodshot state of Bai Xiaochun's eyes, Xu Baocai could tell that now was not the time to chat idly. Shooting to his feet, he immediately began to explain the situation.

“Junior Patriarch, the Wildlands and the Heavenspan region have gone to war....” With that, he began to give a full report. Xu Baocai had always been inclined to gathering information, and that was even more the case considering that he had personally been on the front lines of battle.

He went on to give a very detailed accounting of what had happened while Bai Xiaochun was in the world of the magical item. The more Bai Xiaochun heard, the more his heart began to swell with emotion.

He came to know that the Celestial had issued orders for the four great riversource sects, as well as all their subordinate sects, to wage war on the Wildlands!

He heard that the fighting was intense and bitter. The Wildlands had been forced into a slow retreat, causing their territory to shrink and shrink. They now only occupied about forty to fifty percent of their original lands. In order to put as much pressure on the Wildlanders as possible, the Celestial had mobilized roughly eighty percent of the total cultivators from the lands of Heavenspan. As a result, the war being fought now defied comparison to any other war in history!

Bai Xiaochun also learned that about half a year ago... the fighting had begun to grow even more intense than before. The Celestial seemed impatient, and was willing to pay any price to achieve victory. He didn't even seem to care how many lives were lost! In fact, he had recently issued orders pushing all of his armies toward a final showdown!

The four riversource sects were attacking from four directions, giving the Wildlanders no options for retreat! As a result, the numbers of deaths and injuries had reached incalculable levels!

Blood and corpses covered the lands!

According to Xu Baocai's description, the ground in the Wildlands was the color of blood, and the number of dead souls that filled heaven and earth was impossible to describe. Apparently, the cycle of reincarnation had been broken, making it impossible for souls to enter the Underworld River! They could only haunt the battlefields to no end!

It was no longer a rare thing for a deva to be killed in the fighting. Nine deva experts from the four riversource sects had perished, and on the Wildlands' side, six of the heavenly dukes had been killed!

And there was little need to mention the Nascent Soul experts and Wildlander heavenly marquises. It had already reached the point where a death among their numbers would hardly cause a ripple of shock on either side.

"The Wildlands' four heavenly kings and the Heavenspan region's four demigod patriarchs have fought each other on numerous occasions. Grievous injuries resulted each time, and once, one of them almost perished!

"If things keep going on like this, you can easily imagine a scenario... in which one of the demigods dies. In fact, it will likely be more than one. I'm afraid that in the end, both the Wildlands and the Heavenspan region will have sustained terrible losses...." It was with great bitterness that Xu Baocai explained everything he knew.

"None of us in the River-Defying Sect feel like fighting. And we're not the only ones. I've heard that a lot of disciples from other riversource sects feel the same. But that doesn't matter.... The only one who has the power to stop the fighting is the Celestial. If he wants to keep going, we have no choice but to follow his orders.

"The River-Defying Sect... had no other option but to follow the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect into battle. It's been going on for years

now. And the main opponent of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect... is the Giant Ghost Legion, led by one of the Wildlands' four heavenly kings, the Giant Ghost King!"

Bai Xiaochun's heart trembled at what he was hearing. He had long hoped that this moment would never come, but come it had. He didn't want anyone from the River-Defying Sect or the Giant Ghost King's forces to be hurt.

It was just like back in the days of the Blood Stream Sect and the Spirit Stream Sect....

"It's a good thing that the Giant Ghost Legion is led by Mistress Red-Dust. Nobody knows why, but she has shown mercy to the River-Defying Sect over and over again. If it weren't for that, there wouldn't be many of us left....

"The downside is that it has led to the rest of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect being suspicious of us. In fact... the deva patriarchs issued orders making us the vanguard of the army...." By this point, Xu Baocai couldn't prevent his frustration and madness from erupting.

"Junior Patriarch, it was only three days ago that I got a new intelligence report. The Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect's main army has the Giant Ghost Legion trapped inside of Giant Ghost City! It's the final showdown! What are we supposed to do?!?!"

Bai Xiaochun's heart was pounding, and his bitterness seemed to know no end. Although no one else might know why Mistress Red-Dust was showing mercy to the River-Defying Sect, he knew.

Although he was moved, the fact that the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect had taken advantage of that fact to put the River-Defying Sect on the front lines caused his anger to burn. However, he knew that now was not the time for passion, but for calmness and clarity.

"The River-Defying Sect is my home. I can't allow my family to be hurt.... But the Giant Ghost King and I are good friends. And

Zimo... well, I can't let her get hurt either.... What do I do? What am I supposed to do!?!?" His eyes were bloodshot, and his chest heaved as he stood there trying to make a decision. Xu Baocai's words had turned into something like a tempest inside of him.

Although he had always known that the Wildlands and the Heavenspan region would eventually devolve into all-out war, it had happened too suddenly. He had been caught completely unprepared. Worse, he had wasted years inside of the world of the magical item, to the point where the final battle was already close.

"Why...? Why does there always have to be this fighting and killing?!?! Immortal cultivation is about living forever! Why does it always get made into a matter of people ending each others' lives?!?!" His hands were clenched so tightly that they were shaking.

"Well... I stopped the war between the Blood Stream Sect and the Spirit Stream Sect. And now... I can do the same thing with the Wildlands and the Heavenspan region!!

"Yeah, that's right! Plus, the Celestial said that when I'm a demigod, I can be with my boo....

"And I'm Hao'er's Master! I can definitely stop this!!

"It's all because the Celestial wants to leave this world. Well, if he wants to leave, just let him leave! I'll talk to the gravekeeper! I'll hash things out with Hao'er! We'll just open the Worldgate and let him go!!"

Bai Xiaochun was thinking a thousand things at the same time, and was grasping at any idea he could, not even bothering to think about whether they were realistic. Without any more contemplation, he shot up into the sky.

"I'm going to stop this war!!" With that, he resorted to the fastest speed possible, causing the air to ripple and distort around him. Peals of thunder exploded out as he vanished... in the direction of

the Deadmire!

Instead of wasting time sailing a ship across the Heavenspan Sea, he would go as quickly as he could to the battlefield. He would traverse the Deadmire, enter the Wildlands, and head directly toward Giant Ghost City!

Bai Xiaochun knew the way well. Rumbling sounds echoed out in all directions as he unhesitatingly headed to the Deadmire, and then entered it!

There was no time for coming up with complicated plans. He only had one thought in mind.

“Faster! I have to go faster!”

RUUUUUUUUMBLE....

After an indeterminable period of time in the Deadmire, he shot out... into the Wildlands!

Chapter 995: The Most Powerful Of All Devas

As soon as he entered the Wildlands, the reek of blood and gore assailed his nostrils. Looking around, he saw that the already barren and infertile terrain looked even more desolate. Everything seemed stained deep crimson, and was filled with a sensation of rot.

Although the clues of magical combat could not be seen literally everywhere, it was so pervasive that it was almost omnipresent. Severed limbs, broken bones, and other evidence bore testimony to the countless small-scale skirmishes that had taken place here and there.

The Wildlands had already been devoid of vegetation in most places, and now it was even more so. In fact, the desolate landscape was now covered with rifts and crevices, with many mountains having been completely destroyed.

He passed one area with a diameter of 500 kilometers, which was filled with a muddy slush that emanated an aura of death, and was filled with countless corpses from both sides of the conflict.

Carrion birds congregated among the corpses, picking away at gore and flesh, only to be frightened into the air by Bai Xiaochun's passage.

Masses of them began to fill the sky, staring at Bai Xiaochun with gray, frightened eyes.

The sight of all the corpses caused Bai Xiaochun to shiver. He had seen too many such battlefields in his life. After all... he had fought in quite a few wars. Whether it was the war of the four sects in the Lower Reaches, the numerous fights in the Middle Reaches, or the fierce combat at the Great Wall, Bai Xiaochun was well-acquainted with the savagery of warfare.

But nothing he had ever seen could compare to this.

In the wars he had experienced, the battlefields were usually tended to after the fighting. But in this great war between the Wildlands and the Heavenspan region, no one was going around cleaning up after the fighting.

It was hard to say how long these particular corpses had been here. However, the state of decay they were in caused a gory, fetid aroma to fill heaven and earth....

After merely glancing around, Bai Xiaochun turned and continued to head toward Giant Ghost City.

After he left, the carrion birds calmed down, and eventually went back to their feasting....

Time flew by, although Bai Xiaochun wasn't very conscious of exactly how much. All he knew was that there was no time to waste. Therefore, he used all the means and power at his disposal to speed toward his destination. Any other demigod would have had trouble matching such protracted speed. But Bai Xiaochun had mastered the Undying Blood, and thus had unimaginable powers of regeneration. Even after sustained periods of explosive speed, both his fleshly body and his cultivation base were still at their peak.

He moved so quickly that, from a distance, he was nothing more than a beam of light streaking through the air.

As he got deeper into the Wildlands, he passed one abandoned battlefield after another, causing him to tremble more and more.

The first 500-kilometer-wide battlefield was actually nothing compared to what he saw later. He saw some which were thousands of kilometers across.... There was one which was more than 5,000 kilometers from end to end. Bai Xiaochun wasn't sure what to think about that. All he knew... was that he had never seen such a scene of bloody slaughter.

Craters and ravines covered the landscape. Areas which had once been jungles or forests were now burned to the ground, leaving behind little but cinders and ash.

The savage tribes which had dotted the area were no more. Furthermore, the oversized corpses of the giants were particularly conspicuous on the battlefields.

“Why...?” Bai Xiaochun murmured. The closer he got to Giant Ghost City, the more his anxiety and madness built.

Eventually, when he was actually within the territory that was controlled by Giant Ghost City, he saw... a glowing golden shield that pulsed with the aura of Heavenspan Seawater. Clearly, that shield was keeping the entire area locked down.

In the very middle of the area protected by the shield... in a location far away, but close enough for Bai Xiaochun to see... was a sight that brought back many memories. Giant Ghost City!

The golden shield was obviously created by a spell formation, and was designed to prevent anyone from interfering. The Heavenspan forces wanted Giant Ghost City trapped and isolated. As long as the Giant Ghost Legion managed to hold the line, they would be fine, but if they were defeated, then that golden shield would become like an enormous prison that no Wildlander would be able to escape. All of them would be exterminated.

That shield couldn't have made it more obvious that the Celestial was intent on wiping out the heart and soul of the Wildlands.

The sight of it caused Bai Xiaochun's eyes to become even more bloodshot. Just as he was about to use his Undying Hex to pierce through the shield, it shimmered, and three faces appeared on its surface.

They were all old men, one of whom had a golden horn protruding from his forehead. All three thrummed with deva fluctuations!

Two seemed to be in the late Deva Realm, but the third, the old man with the horn, was in the great circle, just like Chen Haosong.

When they saw Bai Xiaochun approaching from off in the distance, their pupils constricted. They could sense that he was in the great circle of the Deva Realm, and that he pulsed with the spiritual energy of heaven and earth.

Eyes flashing sharply, the old man with the horn coolly said, "He's not a Wildlander heavenly duke.... But nobody from the four rivers is in the great circle....

"Halt! I am Arcane Guard Ouyang Chen from Heavenspan Island! I'm here on orders from the Celestial to maintain this life-severing spell formation. I don't care which sect you come from, deva, leave immediately, or you will be executed!"

These old men were actually not from any of the four riversource sects. They were from Heavenspan Island, and worked directly for the Celestial. They were a type of guard that outranked the special guards. They were arcane guards!

Arcane guards were recruited from throughout the Heavenspan region, and then propelled into the Deva Realm by means of a secret magic. No one knew exactly how many of them there were, not even the demigod patriarchs from the four rivers. They were yet another secret weapon that the Celestial used to maintain control.

There was even a rumor of a group that outranked the arcane guards. The divine guards!

All of the special and arcane guards from Heavenspan had been deployed, not only to root out and execute enemy resistance, but also to act as a sort of military police. In fact, their life-severing grand spell formation was part of their mission to carry out the final extermination of the enemy.

As far as these arcane guards were concerned, other than the

demigods, no one from the four rivers qualified to deserve their respect. Devas from the four riversource sects were the type of people the arcane guards could berate at any time they wished.

Under any other circumstance, Bai Xiaochun would have provided a polite explanation. But right now, he was gripped by anxiety. He knew that the Giant Ghost King was at war with the River-Defying Sect and the other eastern sects. Therefore, there was no time to waste giving explanations to people who wanted to block his path. Therefore, instead of slowing down, he actually accelerated.

He was like a bolt loosed from a crossbow, shooting toward the golden shield at incredible speed.

“Suicidal recklessness!” said the old man with the horn, his eyes flickering with disdain. Despite the fact that Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation base rippled with the fluctuations of the great circle of the Deva Realm, the old man still snorted coldly. “Kill him!”

The other two arcane guards chuckled, and the enormous faces which represented them shrank down into two shadowy blurs that flew out from the spell formation and headed toward Bai Xiaochun. From the way they glowed with the same golden light as the spell formation, it was obvious that they had clearly been powered up by it!

The spell formation contained shocking power that, when focused onto a deva, could push his or her battle prowess very close to the level of the great circle.

Clearly, the power provided by the spell formation was the reason why the horned old man and his companions were so confident and arrogant.

“It doesn’t matter who tries to attack the life-severing grand spell formation,” shouted one of the incoming arcane guards, his voice echoing like thunder, “anyone who violates the orders of the Celestial will be killed!”

As the two devas closed in, they performed incantation gestures, summoning a huge golden scorpion that charged toward Bai Xiaochun, radiating killing intent.

“Get the hell out of my way!” Bai Xiaochun shouted, pushing forward with even greater speed. His voice became a shockwave that rumbled out with mountain-toppling, sea-draining force.

The two arcane guards had no time to even get close to Bai Xiaochun. The power of his shout slammed into them, causing blood to spray from their mouths as massive force crushed into them. Their golden scorpion couldn't fight back, and to the shock of the two devas, completely exploded!

“You....”

“He’s no deva....”

The two arcane guards’ expressions were those of complete shock, to the point where their eyes were about to explode.

Bai Xiaochun’s voice had been propelled by his cultivation base and battle prowess, and resulted in destructive force... that could decimate any other deva!

He was... the most powerful of all devas!

Chapter 996: Arriving At Giant Ghost City!

The two arcane guards only had the wherewithal to let out cries of alarm before instinctively retreating.

They knew that they couldn't possibly fight back against the power of Bai Xiaochun's shout!

The destructive power contained in his voice surpassed anything they could imagine, and left them overwhelmed with horror!

Unfortunately, no matter how fast they reacted, it wasn't fast enough. Expressions of unimaginable terror and despair filled their faces as they were overwhelmed by the deadly soundwave!

They were simply too weak to stand up to it.... They exploded, their bodies turning into ash... and their nascent divinities unable to escape. Being trapped within their fleshly bodies, their nascent divinities... were also wiped out of existence!!

It happened too quickly for anyone to process. Two proud arcane guards were exterminated in the blink of an eye.... The old man with the horn almost couldn't believe what he was seeing.

"He's... he's not a deva!!" In his estimation, there was simply no deva who could exterminate two other late Deva Realm experts simply by shouting.... Only a demigod could do that!!

So terrified that he was instantly bereft of courage, the old man with the horn unhesitatingly backed up. His level of speed was too slow when it came to Bai Xiaochun, but thankfully for him, Bai Xiaochun wasn't in the mood to pay him even a bit of attention. He was only concerned with getting to the battlefield as quickly as possible!

As he shot head-first toward the golden life-severing grand spell formation, the old man with the horn looked on in complete shock. However, it was also in that moment that a spark of hope appeared in his heart.

“So, he’s going to break through.... However, even a demigod who gets inside will still be suppressed. He’s definitely courting death!!” The old man stopped retreating, and his eyes began to shine with killing intent. After all, he was in the great circle of the Deva Realm, and an arcane guard from Heavenspan Island. He was a shrewd schemer, the type who could kill others without hesitation. Suddenly more confident than before, he flew toward Bai Xiaochun as if to block his way.

However, even as he closed in, Bai Xiaochun used his Undying Hex, enabling him to shoot forward as though the spell formation didn't even exist.

The old man with the horn couldn’t react in time. Face filling with far more terror than before, he tried to back away. Unfortunately for him, it was now too late to start retreating again....

Bai Xiaochun used the Undying Hex and the Mountain Shaking Bash without even thinking about it. In the briefest of moments, he slammed into the horned old man.

A boom rang out as the man felt something like an infinitude of heavenly mountains slamming into him. Screaming miserably, he exploded. His nascent divinity had no time to flee before it was also sucked into the blast of power, and was completely destroyed.

This was Bai Xiaochun at his peak!!

After piercing through the spell formation, Bai Xiaochun didn't so much as look back to see what happened to the horned old man. The man had blocked his path, and had thus rushed to his own death. Furthermore, the encounter didn’t slow Bai Xiaochun down at all.

With his Undying Hex, the life-severing grand spell formation might as well have not existed. Without the slightest pause, Bai Xiaochun appeared... 25,000 kilometers away from Giant Ghost City!

His ears could already detect the sounds of shouting and fighting far off in the distance. Furthermore, it was possible for him... to see the battlefield!!

Immediately, he was shaken to the core!

Countless cultivators from the eastern Heavenspan region were there, eyes bloodshot as they fought with madness. Savage giants and soul cultivators were present in abundance. Everyone seemed to have been pushed to their limit, and were fighting with the understanding that one side would come out alive, and the other would be dead.

Some would resort to self-detonation before being killed, taking their opponent with them into death!

The explosions on the battlefield were deafening, and yet, that didn't matter.... Hearing was not required to kill the enemy!

Virtually the entire area from his current location to Giant Ghost City, a stretch of 25,000 kilometers, was all a huge battlefield. Bai Xiaochun had never seen any sort of fighting on this scale before.

Shouts, screams, wild laughter, and a cacophony of other sounds melded together into a symphony of death. It was as if the will of heaven and earth was simply holding back and watching... as the mountains of corpses built up!

It was already hard to find intact corpses. The enemies tore each other apart... and blood flowed in rivers....

There were hundreds of thousands of cultivators fighting madly, making the battlefield like a giant millstone that was constantly crushing life out of existence.

There were no troop formations, nor any officers issuing orders. Everyone was simply fighting like wild animals.

Nascent Soul experts almost didn't count for anything in this type of fighting, much less Core Formation cultivators, who could be exterminated in the blink of an eye.

War chariots and other precious treasures of war were visible, most tattered and damaged, but still capable of unleashing destructive power!

The most terrifying fighting went on high in the air, where the demigods were locked in combat. The Giant Ghost King's enormous frame was covered with wounds and scars. In one place, a spear had stabbed right through him, which currently belched out black smoke that formed nine black dragons that stabbed at him constantly. Despite the grievous nature of his injuries, the Giant Ghost King continued to fight with bitter madness against the demigod patriarch from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect!

The demigod patriarch was in equally bad shape. His chest was partly caved in, and one of his arms was missing. He was rife with an aura of death, and yet, his killing intent continued to rage as brightly as ever.

Every time the demigods came back around for another volley, their fighting would cause rifts to spread out in the sky, and would cause all the lands to tremble.

The mere shockwaves spreading out from their attacks were like tempests that could destroy everything in their path

Below the level of the demigod fighting were the devas from Giant Ghost City and the eastern Heavenspan region. Their deadly battle caused thunderous booms to fill heaven and earth at every moment.

Mistress Red-Dust was there, as were Patriarch Spirit Stream, Bai Zhentian, Chen Hetian, and the child deva!

Patriarch Steel Veins was nowhere to be seen, nor was Duke Netherworld!

There were four devas from the Heavenspan side, and only two on the Wildlands side: Mistress Red-Dust, and a heavenly duke that Bai Xiaochun remembered from Arch-Emperor City.

The fighting between the six devas had reached a deadly crossroads, and was actually the focus of much attention within the life-severing grand spell formation.

In the moment that Bai Xiaochun arrived, a deafening explosion filled the air. The source was the heavenly duke, who, in the face of death, chuckled bitterly and chose to self-detonate. As the destructive power of his death swept out, the child deva from the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect was too slow to escape... and was killed in body and soul!

As the two devas met their end, Mistress Red-Dust coughed up a mouthful of blood under the combined attack of Chen Hetian and Bai Zhentian. Injuries worsening, she laughed sadly and tried to back up.

Gasping for breath, Chen Hetian shouted, “Frigidsect, if you keep holding back like this, then after the fighting is over I’ll exterminate your River-Defying Sect!!”

With that, he and Bai Zhentian began to chase Mistress Red-Dust. Clearly, their goal was to cut down the daughter of the Giant Ghost King, the sergeant-major and leader of the Giant Ghost Legion!

“Killing her will distract the Giant Ghost King! That will give the patriarch the chance he needs to kill him!!”

Patriarch Spirit Stream looked on bitterly as Chen Hetian and Bai Zhentian began to chase down Mistress Red-Dust. The River-Defying Sect had suffered the least casualties of all thanks to her mercy, although the patriarch wasn’t sure why that was. However, at this moment, he was on the side of the lands of Heavenspan, and as such, his hands were tied. Sighing, he took a step forward.

As the three Heavenspan devas began to make their move, and as Mistress Red-Dust sighed and prepared to use her most powerful divine ability. However....

That was when a howl of rage split heaven and earth, shattering

the air.

“Stay your hand!!”

Along with these words came a bright beam of light that shot across the battlefield, bursting with energy that could shake heaven and earth.

It was only moments away!

Chapter 997: I'm Back

The explosive voice preceded the arrival of the speaker!

It was so loud that even Chen Hetian felt his ears vibrating and his mind reeling on the verge of collapse. Blood began to ooze out of his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, and before he could react to what was happening, he felt as though his brain had been hit with a sledgehammer.

Bai Zhentian was in equally bad condition. His five yin organs and six yang organs quivered on the verge of collapse, and as he coughed up a huge mouthful of blood, his soul twitched as though it might shatter.

Only Patriarch Spirit Stream wasn't affected. However, his shock at hearing that familiar voice caused an expression of disbelief to cover his face. Even as he contemplated whether to look over his shoulder at the source, the air in the area rippled and distorted.

Bai Xiaochun shot onto the scene with speed that seemed capable of ripping apart heaven and earth. In the blink of an eye, he was upon Chen Hetian and Bai Zhentian, who were combining forces to try to kill Mistress Red-Dust!

He seemed like a razor-sharp arrow that could pierce through anything that got in his way. Before anyone could react, he was next to Mistress Red-Dust. Wrapping her up in his right arm, he waved his left index finger at Chen Hetian and Bai Zhentian!

He was not attacking in full force, but instead, merely waving his finger. Even still, the sky went dim, and a huge wind kicked up. At the same time, battle prowess that surpassed the level of a deva cultivation base exploded out.

A deafening boom filled the entire battlefield, accompanied by miserable shrieks from Chen Hetian and Bai Zhentian.

Blood sprayed out of Chen Hetian's mouth as an unimaginable

force entered him. It was so powerful that he became like a bag of water, with his blood being the water! Under the intense power of that force, the water was immediately ejected out of the bag!

Blood began to rush out of his eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and even his pores....

He was thrown backward beyond his control, accompanied by cracking sounds as his bones broke and shattered. Chen Hetian wasn't even able to stand up to a single attack from Bai Xiaochun!

His entire body began to break apart, until even his bones were nothing more than powder. At that point, there was nothing left to sustain his physical form, and he became little more than a lump of flesh and blood!

And yet, things weren't over yet! Having no bones or blood left, he could do nothing other than scream as the rest of his body shattered to pieces!

He now existed only in nascent divinity form! Screaming in fear, he fled, mind gripped with terror and shock.

"You're... Bai Xiaochun!? You're... a demigod?!?!" He could only speak incoherently, shocked as he was that a single wave of Bai Xiaochun's finger could be so terrifying.

Of course, Chen Hetian wasn't the only one to be injured. Bai Zhentian suffered a similar fate. His blood exploded out of his body, and his bones shattered as he was thrown backward violently. No amount of defensive magical items or magics did anything to help him.

Luckily for him, he only lost about half of his body. Even as his blood showered down onto the ground, he backed up, having survived in fleshly body form, unlike Chen Hetian.

Although devas could survive in nascent divinity form, that didn't mean that their fleshly bodies weren't important. Not only would the loss of a fleshly body significantly reduce their battle

prowess, the process of forming a new body would be extremely costly. For all intents and purposes, existing in such a state meant that their overall cultivation base level was greatly weakened.

“Bai Xiaochun!?!?” Bai Zhentian shouted, trembling in disbelief.

Everything happened in the blink of an eye. Bai Xiaochun arrived, waved his finger, and within a few breaths of time, completely reversed the situation on the battlefield. Everyone who was present to witness it was completely bowled over.

Furthermore... this was him showing restraint. Although he was furious, he hadn't come here to kill anyone. No, he wished to do the same thing he had done with the Spirit and Blood Stream Sects. He wanted to end the war between the Wildlands and the Heavenspan region!

Therefore, he didn't exterminate Bai Zhentian and Chen Hetian. Although he hated Chen Hetian with a vengeance, he spared his life. He had only added a bit more power into the attack against him, ensuring that his fleshly body was destroyed.

“Xiaochun....” Patriarch Spirit Stream murmured, his heart battered by waves of shock as he hovered there in midair, looking over at Bai Xiaochun. Bai Xiaochun had been missing for years now, and hadn't sent back any word at all. Although Patriarch Spirit Stream would never say it out loud, he had missed him during that time. But he could never have been prepared to see him back all of a sudden, and with such shocking battle prowess.

Patriarch Spirit Stream was also a deva, and thus knew exactly how powerful Chen Hetian and Bai Zhentian were. The fact that both of them had been so grievously injured, simultaneously, and with only the wave of a finger... led him to the only possible explanation.

Bai Xiaochun must be a demigod!

It seemed completely absurd. Patriarch Spirit Stream had always

had faith in Bai Xiaochun, and had long looked forward to seeing him grow into his potential. But what good fortune could he possibly have come across that propelled him, in only a few short years, from the early Deva Realm... into the Demigod Realm!?!?

Equally shaken was Mistress Red-Dust, who rested against his shoulder looking up at him, her eyes both exhausted and confused. She almost didn't dare to believe that what was happening was real.

Looking down at her with mixed emotions, he softly said, "I'm back."

When she heard his words, and felt the warmth of his body against hers, she smiled. Suddenly, the weight of all the years of battle seemed to fade a bit. Then, the exhaustion hit her with mountain-toppling, sea-draining force, and she lapsed into unconsciousness.

To see her pass out from fatigue in such a way caused prickles of pain to hit Bai Xiaochun in the heart. He put her down carefully, then looked up at Patriarch Spirit Stream.

"Greetings, Patriarch!" he said, clasping hands and bowing.

Patriarch Spirit Stream could hardly breathe straight, and his expression was that of complete incredulity. He opened his mouth to speak, and yet couldn't find any words to do so. The level of Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base was so preposterous that it almost seemed like a dream.

"Patriarch, please call together all the disciples of the River-Defying Sect. We... will not be fighting in this war!" Bai Xiaochun had been in a bad mood to begin with, but it was only made worse by the situation around him on the battlefield.

Patriarch Spirit Stream gasped in response to his words, but then his eyes began to shine. Considering the level of his own cultivation base, he had not been able to lead the River-Defying

Sect in a show of conscience in this war.

But with Bai Xiaochun back with a cultivation base as lofty as the starry sky itself, a person who could unleash shocking power with a mere wave of his hand, all of a sudden, Patriarch Spirit Stream's heart was filled with hope.

Without the slightest hesitation, he spoke out over the battlefield, bolstering his voice with the power of his cultivation base.

“Disciples of the River-Defying Sect. To me!”

Moments before, his voice would hardly have been heard on the battlefield. But now, even though there was still fighting going on, Bai Xiaochun's shocking appearance had caused many people to pause in place and look up. Furthermore, the words that Bai Xiaochun had spoken moments ago had been heard by many.

The River-Defying Sect disciples' hearts began to pound as they flew into the air toward Patriarch Spirit Stream. Numerous beams of light appeared, within which were many familiar faces, such as Shangguan Tianyou, Beihan Lie, Song Que, Master God-Diviner, and... Song Junwan.

Few people had as complex of an expression as Song Junwan, who couldn't stop looking at the unconscious Mistress Red-Dust. Bai Xiaochun noticed her glances. In fact, he had locked onto her with his divine sense much earlier, and had noted that Song Que was doing his best to keep her safe.

Although he felt somewhat proud of how things were going, he knew that now was not the time to let his guard down. Moments ticked by, and the River-Defying Sect disciples began to gather together.

No one dared to get in their way.

Chen Hetian only existed in nascent divinity form now, and was still trembling in fear. However, when he saw what was

happening, his hatred for Bai Xiaochun bubbled up, and he said, “What is the meaning of this, Bai Xiaochun? Don’t tell me you’re rebelling against the Heavenspan Realm?!?”

Chapter 998: I Will... Make You Stop!

Off to the side, Bai Zhentian gasped for breath as he looked over at Bai Xiaochun. Merely thinking about what that simple wave of a finger had done to him caused his heart to tremble with foreboding.

Seeing that Bai Xiaochun was ignoring him, Chen Hetian's eyes blazed with anger, and he said, "You can't stop this war, Bai Xiaochun. You can't possibly deal with the consequences of betraying the Celestial!!"

Bai Xiaochun looked over at him coldly. "Unless you feel like dying... shut up!"

His gaze caused Chen Hetian to shiver in fear. Despite his fury, he didn't dare to keep speaking. Furthermore, he also realized that it had been quite impulsive of him to run his mouth. Bai Xiaochun was obviously the type of person he couldn't afford to provoke.

Ignoring the livid Chen Hetian, Bai Xiaochun picked Mistress Red-Dust up again and then handed her over to Song Junwan.

"Wan'er, take care of Zimo for me.... After everything's taken care of here, I'll explain." With that, Bai Xiaochun looked up into the sky!

Up above, the Giant Ghost King was fighting the demigod patriarch of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect. Although both of them were aware that Bai Xiaochun had come, they didn't have time to pay much attention to him. Both demigods knew that the slightest lapse in concentration could lead to terrible consequences.

At the moment, Bai Xiaochun had the beginnings of an idea regarding how to stop the war, but wasn't completely confident in being able to succeed. Whether it was the Celestial or the gravekeeper, there was little he could do other than try to persuade

them to agree with his viewpoint.

Regardless, he couldn't allow the River-Defying Sect to participate in the fighting. Furthermore, he needed the fighting in the immediate vicinity to stop first.

“Everybody, stop fighting!” he said loudly. His voice sounded like millions upon millions of thunderclaps, and caused everything in the area to shake violently. The entire battlefield filled with the echoing sound of his voice, almost like the combined shouting of an innumerable host of people.

“Stop fighting!!”

“Stop fighting!!!”

“Stop fighting!!!!”

The cultivators on both sides of the conflict were deeply shaken, and could sense something in those words that seemingly surpassed heavenly might. On an instinctive level, they were forced to stop in place and obey the words they heard.

However, even after forcing everyone to stop fighting, Bai Xiaochun's heart was still in chaos. He knew that the most important aspect of the fight was not on the battlefield below, nor was it the conflict between the devas.... The most important fight was overhead, between the two demigods. Forcing himself into a state of calm focus, he looked up and spoke in a voice even louder than before.

“Giant Ghost, old pal. Patriarch Starry Sky. Listen to me for a moment. Stop fighting!!”

His voice was propelled by urgency, sweeping up into the sky to form a tempest of violent wind. Earlier, the Giant Ghost King and Patriarch Starry Sky had been able to sense some of Bai Xiaochun's level of power, and had also noticed how he stopped everyone from fighting. But now that they heard his voice in their own ears, how it thrummed with focus and determination, both of them gasped in

shock.

However, considering how involved they were with fighting each other, they couldn't afford to be distracted. The Giant Ghost King was right in the middle of waving the hand of his gargantuan giant ghost form, which caused it to collapse into black smoke that reformed into a larger, autonomous ghost hand that shot forward toward Patriarch Starry Sky.

Patriarch Starry Sky waved his remaining arm, causing an illusory starscape to materialize behind him, making it seem as if he were shouldering the entire starry sky. Eyes burning with killing intent, he performed an incantation gesture and then pointed out, sending countless stars from behind him shooting toward the Giant Ghost King.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that they were just continuing to fight, his eyes flashed, and his fury built. Holding his breath, he shot up into the air.

As he did, he unleashed all of the power of his cultivation base, causing the fluctuations of the great circle of the Deva Realm to roll out. At the same time, he began to pulse with fleshly body power, his qi and blood merging with his cultivation base to reveal... power that surpassed that of a deva. This was... demigod power!

As of this moment, Bai Xiaochun... was not technically a demigod, but in terms of battle prowess... was no different than one!

He became a vertical beam of light that shot up like a reverse falling star, heading right toward where the demigods were fighting!

Down below, Patriarch Spirit Stream and everyone else from the River-Defying Sect watched with visible excitement. All of them were thinking back to the scene in which Bai Xiaochun raced out to stand between the Spirit and Blood Stream Sects.

“Can he do it again...?” Patriarch Spirit Stream murmured. Considering how exhausted everyone on the battlefield was, if the fighting truly stopped... it would be a blessing to both the Heavenspan cultivators and the Wildlanders.

The River-Defying Sect cultivators weren't the only ones who felt that way. After the lull in the fighting created by Bai Xiaochun's shout, all of the cultivators down below were now looking up into the sky with keen anticipation.

Bai Xiaochun accelerated rapidly until he was like a burning ball of fire, streaking up into the sky, surrounded by wave-like ripples.

“Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformation!”

As he climbed to the heights of the firmament, he began to grow larger and larger!

60 meters tall. 90 meters. 120 meters....

As he grew taller, his frame filled in with muscle, and he began to radiate a powerful energy. Even as everyone looked on, he reached a height of 210 meters!

“Cloud Lightning Forefather, Eighth Transformation!” he shouted, continuing to grow until he was 240 meters tall, powerfully built, with a wild and barbaric air.

270 meters.... 300 meters.... 330 meters....

Things weren't over yet! 360 meters. 390 meters....

By the time he reached the area where the Giant Ghost King and Patriarch Starry Sky were fighting, he had reached the last of the Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations!

“Eleventh Transformation!!”

Intense rumbling sounds echoed out that were so loud it that seemed like they might end the heavens and crush the earth. At that point, Bai Xiaochun was 510 meters tall, and truly looked like the forefather of all humanity.

Each of the Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformations increased one's height by thirty meters. Therefore, normally speaking, the eleventh transformation would push a cultivator to a height of 330 meters. However, because Bai Xiaochun cultivated the Sun-Moon Vast-Sky Incantation, each of his eyes added the power of an additional three transformations. By adding that power of six further transformations, he was propelled to a height of... 510 meters!

His cultivation base surged, and his fleshly body power caused boundless blood-colored light to surround him like clothing. In all respects, he was completely eye-catching.

Furthermore, the entire world had begun to tremble, and a new energy appeared that only the demigods could sense. It was as if... the entire world approved of Bai Xiaochun!!

It was something that, previously, only the gravekeeper, the Hell-Emperor, and the Celestial had been able to wield... the power of the world itself!

The Giant Ghost King's face fell, and Patriarch Starry Sky looked over in complete disbelief as Bai Xiaochun, completely oblivious to any divine abilities being unleashed... lunged in between the two of them!!

"Stop fighting!" Bai Xiaochun growled. Because of his Forefather Transformation, he looked completely barbaric. Face twisting viciously, he clenched his right hand into a fist and punched out at Patriarch Starry Sky's divine ability, the dazzling starry sky!

A deafening boom could be heard as his fist smashed into the countless heavenly bodies, sending all of them spinning away!

Bai Xiaochun shivered from the force of the blow. After all, this was a demigod he was dealing with. However, thanks to the regenerative powers of his Undying Blood, it took only a single breath of time for him to be back at his peak level.

“I said stop it!!” he shouted, clenching his left hand into a fist and striking out at the black smoke hand coming from the Giant Ghost King!

Winds screamed as the black hand of smoke was ripped to pieces.

And yet, things still weren't over! Even as his Undying Blood healed him, Bai Xiaochun waved both of his hands out in front of him, shoving both of the demigods apart. For the third time... he spoke in a voice that echoed like thunder in the ears of the Giant Ghost King and Patriarch Starry Sky.

“I told you two... to stop fighting!!!”

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!

The two shocked and injured demigods could do nothing other than fall back!

Chapter 999: Fighting A Demigod!

The cultivators on both sides of the conflict all gasped reflexively. Although they had already been shaken by Bai Xiaochun's power, none of them could ever have imagined that he would reach such an unbelievable level!

“This... this is impossible!!” Chen Hetian in nascent divinity form was shaking uncontrollably. Although he had already guessed that Bai Xiaochun was a demigod, he had assumed that he would be on roughly the same level as the Giant Ghost King and Patriarch Starry Sky, and could potentially fight one of the other two demigods. How could he have ever guessed... that Bai Xiaochun could actually sustain divine ability attacks from both of them, and not even be injured!?!?

Only the most powerful among demigods could possibly attempt to interfere with two other fighting demigods, much less forcibly stop them from fighting!

Bai Zhentian was equally shaken. He was also well-versed in knowledge of demigods, and thus, was completely terrified by Bai Xiaochun.

“How could this be?” Bai Zhentian murmured to himself. “He's only been away for a few years....” His mind was in complete chaos, and he could hardly think straight.

Few people in the River-Defying Sect knew much about the subject. However, Patriarch Spirit Stream had a much better understanding of things, and was being battered by waves of shock. The fact that Bai Xiaochun had demigod battle prowess was so preposterous that he almost wondered if he was seeing things.

More shocked than anyone down below were the Giant Ghost King and Patriarch Starry Sky. The Giant Ghost King was especially taken aback; his eyes nearly bulged out of his skull as he pointed at Bai Xiaochun and said, “You little punk! How... how did

you change so much!? You're so strong!!”

Patriarch Starry Sky was not as familiar with Bai Xiaochun as the Giant Ghost King was. However, Bai Xiaochun was a member of the Starry Sky Dao Polarity Sect, and had made a deep impression on the sect after becoming a deva.

Therefore, Patriarch Starry Sky was just as shocked, and was even trembling with apprehension!

The fact that Bai Xiaochun had reached such a level of power so quickly was astonishing to the ultimate level.

“He's not a demigod!” Patriarch Starry Sky murmured, his pupils constricting. As a demigod himself, his keen senses enabled him to detect that, despite having the battle prowess of a demigod, he had not formed a true demigod divine soul.

Patriarch Starry Sky wasn't the only one to reach this conclusion. The Giant Ghost King could also see the clues. And yet, that didn't reduce the level of shock that either of them felt: it actually increased it!

“He's... not actually a demigod!!”

“The great circle of the Deva Realm.... How is this possible? In my entire life, I've never seen anyone in that level as strong as him!!”

Even as the two demigods reeled in shock, Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath, then hurried to clasp hands in formal greeting to both of them.

After rising from his bow, he spoke in a bitter voice. “My old pal Giant Ghost. Patriarch Starry Sky. Stop fighting. Enough people have been killed. There's no point in this war between the Wildlands and the Heavenspan region!!”

Both the Giant Ghost King and Patriarch Starry Sky frowned, but didn't respond immediately. A long moment passed, whereupon Patriarch Starry Sky snorted coldly. Eyes flashing, he said, “Fellow

Daoist Bai, if the River-Defying Sect wishes to stay out of the war, fine. I have the authority to make a decision on the matter. Take your people and leave. However, even with your demigod battle prowess, you can't end the war just by telling everyone to stop fighting!"

Although it didn't seem like Patriarch Starry Sky was being particularly polite, anyone who was familiar with him would realize that he was actually restraining himself to a considerable degree.

He had no choice but to admit to how powerful Bai Xiaochun was. Furthermore, as the demigod patriarch who controlled the entire eastern Heavenspan region, he had the power to allow a Middle Reaches sect to be exempt from the fighting. As far as he was concerned, that was more than enough of a concession.

It was also a method to prevent Bai Xiaochun from defecting to the Wildlands.

Even as Patriarch Starry Sky spoke, the Giant Ghost King looked deeply at Bai Xiaochun. Visible within his eyes was a flicker of warmth; he knew that Bai Xiaochun had the best of intentions, and hoped to stop the war. However, the Giant Ghost King happened to agree with Patriarch Starry Sky. The war couldn't be stopped just because Bai Xiaochun demanded it.

"The enmity between the Arch-Emperor Dynasty and the lands of Heavenspan goes back many years, Xiaochun," he said. "I know you mean well, but you should just leave. And please, take Zimo with you...." With that, he turned to face Patriarch Starry Sky.

When the gazes of the two demigods met, they both flashed as if with fire. Neither of them had prevented their words from echoing down onto the battlefield. Down below, the cultivators from both sides, whether they wanted to or not, no matter how bitterly they felt about it, began to stoke their killing intent.

Bai Xiaochun could see that fighting was only moments from

breaking out again. At that point, the determination in his eyes grew more intense. He knew that if he couldn't even stop this one battle, then he couldn't possibly do anything to make the Celestial and the gravekeeper agree to stop the war as a whole.

Furthermore, he couldn't allow the situation to end in an unbalanced way.... If he did, then it would make it even more impossible to convince the Celestial and the gravekeeper to agree with him.

Lowering his head, he spoke in voice that pulsed with determination. "You people want a fight...? Well then... fight me! Kill me in whatever way you'd like. I'm done with all this!

"But, if you can't beat me... then I don't care if you're a 'majestic' demigod, you'd better not try to fight anyone else in my presence!

"You're up first, Patriarch Starry Sky. If I can't convince you with words, then I'll have to beat you into submission. And as for you, Giant Ghost, old pal, you just wait until I'm done putting Patriarch Starry Sky in his place. Then you'll have your turn!" Chuckling coldly, he looked up at the two demigods, his eyes completely bloodshot.

Both Giant Ghost King and Patriarch Starry Sky were visibly taken aback. However, the Giant Ghost King knew Bai Xiaochun better than his demigod counterpart. Although he wasn't very happy with what Bai Xiaochun had just said, he did nothing more than glare at him.

But Patriarch Starry Sky did more than that. He began to laugh with increasing volume, until the sky vibrated and distorted. Moments ago, the sun had been shining brightly, but now it seemed as dark as night. Furthermore... an unfamiliar starry sky was visible overhead!

This was Patriarch Starry Sky's Daoist magic, something that could replace the starry sky overhead. It was as if his will had surpassed the will of the world itself!

“What you just felt a moment ago was only a tiny fraction of the power of my divine ability, Bai Xiaochun. Other than the Celestial and the gravekeeper, no one alive qualifies to talk about beating me into submission!”

“Time will tell,” Bai Xiaochun replied coolly. Based on his brief interchange with the two demigods, and seeing the regenerative powers of his own Undying Blood in action, Bai Xiaochun was fairly certain... that he was even stronger than he had thought before.

“Fine!” Patriarch Starry Sky said. Chuckling angrily, he pointed up at the starry sky above him, and then waved his finger down. In response, the stars began to shine dazzlingly, and then, seemingly in response to Patriarch Starry Sky’s orders, sent streams of starlight down from above.

It was a majestic sight to behold. Everyone below shivered nervously at the seemingly transcendent power of this demigod patriarch. It was as if the power of a divine being were on display, power that could rock the foundation of the very world!

“Spear of the Starry Sky!” he said coolly. In response to his words, the swirling starlight converged in front of him, radiating intensely powerful energy as it took the shape of an enormous spear!

The spear seemed to fill the entire sky, and as Patriarch Starry Sky pointed his finger in Bai Xiaochun’s direction, the spear began to rotate, and then stabbed toward him!

An intense sensation of imminent crisis filled Bai Xiaochun’s heart. At the same time, the ground trembled, causing rocks and rubble to rise up into the air, and filling the hearts of the cultivators with profound sensations of dread.

“Be destroyed!” Patriarch Starry Sky said, his eyes shining with cold light.

Intense energy exploded out, causing cracking sounds to fill the air around Bai Xiaochun. Almost immediately, his skin began to sink in, revealing countless spinning vortexes. His hair began to whip about, and as the spear closed in, his eyes began to shine with blood-red light!

Chapter 1000: Heaven-Defying Regeneration!

“You might qualify to tangle with demigods, Bai Xiaochun. But you certainly don’t qualify to prevent us from fighting!” Patriarch Starry Sky’s voice echoed like thunder from the highest heavens. His hand flashed with incantation gestures as he sent his Spear of the Starry Sky speeding closer and closer to Bai Xiaochun!

The air around Bai Xiaochun couldn’t withstand the force, and shattered, and even the land far beneath him began to quake.

No one on the battlefield uttered a single word. Everyone was looking up to see what would happen. Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun took a slow breath, and the burning, blood-colored glow in his eyes began to intensify. At the same time, his energy began to rise!

Rumbling sounds filled the air, and his hair whipped about him, making him seem like a god of battle. Directly facing the enormous spear... he extended his right hand!

“Like I said. Time will tell whether or not I can beat you into submission.” With that, he violently clenched his hand into a fist.

At the same time, the moon sigil in his left eye shone with dazzling light, and the sun mark in his right eye blazed to life. With his Cloud Lightning Forefather incarnation, and the full power of his fleshly body and cultivation base at play... he had battle prowess that could transform the heavens and temper the earth!

All of this takes a bit of time to describe, but happened in the mere blink of an eye. The Spear of the Starry Sky closed in with indescribable energy, until it was right in front of Bai Xiaochun!

The spear was impossibly huge, fully 30,000 meters long. It radiated intense levels of energy that made it seem like countless heavenly mountains were about to crush Bai Xiaochun out of

existence. In fact, it seemed strong enough to end the world. It was easy to imagine a scene in which that spear hit Bai Xiaochun and crushed him out of existence as easily as a dried weed.

However, it was in that moment that, instead of backing up, Bai Xiaochun actually shot forward, becoming a meteor that headed directly toward the Spear of the Starry Sky.

“Cloud Lightning Forefather... Sun-Moon Binary Brilliance!”

A wild and barbaric aura erupted out of Bai Xiaochun, along with a howl that truly seemed to come from the forefather of all humanity. At the same time, each of his eyes shone with the brilliance of both a sun and a moon! Dazzling light erupted out as Bai Xiaochun... slammed into the Spear of the Starry Sky!

The Giant Ghost King was visibly shaken, and Patriarch Starry Sky had a very serious expression on his face. The cultivators down below forgot to breathe as they watched the spectacular scene playing out up above!

An indescribably loud boom echoed out, shaking everything in the entire area, and causing the air to vibrate in shocking fashion.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

The 30,000-meter-long Spear of the Starry Sky stopped in place. Then, cracks spread out across its surface, making it obvious from the very outset that it couldn't sustain a single blow from Bai Xiaochun. However, it lasted for several breaths of time, during which the rumbling sounds grew more intense. Finally... the spear collapsed into pieces!

Innumerable starry sparks showered out everywhere as Bai Xiaochun was thrown backward by the force of the impact. Blood oozed out of the corners of his mouth, and his chest was mostly caved in. His cultivation base was also in chaos, and his skin was covered with countless rips and tears.

However, when he planted his foot in an attempt to stop his

backward motion, the rips and tears in his skin closed up, and his chest was no longer caved in. He took a second step back, whereupon his cultivation base stabilized, and his fleshly body power was back at its peak.

Then he took a third step, stopping his momentum and looking up. As he did, his energy surged mightily.... It was as if he hadn't even been hurt to begin with!

Eyes glittering brightly, he looked at Patriarch Starry Sky, still surrounded by the cascades of shattered starlight.

“That’s all you’ve got?” Bai Xiaochun said. Countless gasps could be heard from the congregated cultivators below, many of whom also cried out in shock....

“He’s not hurt at all!!”

“Heavens! This Bai Xiaochun... he recovered almost immediately from Patriarch Starry Sky’s divine ability!!”

“This... this....”

They weren’t the only shocked ones. The Giant Ghost King was equally stunned.

He looked over at Bai Xiaochun, eyes wide with disbelief, completely taken aback by what he was seeing.

“With regeneration abilities like that... who could possibly kill him?!”

Patriarch Starry Sky was nearly overwhelmed by massive waves of astonishment, and immediately began to pant.

As a demigod, he had been able to see how badly Bai Xiaochun had been injured by his spear. Although the destruction of the spear was not surprising, it was most certainly a shock to see Bai Xiaochun recover in the time it took to step backward a few times.

It defied belief, and at the same time, cause fear to bubble up deep in his heart.

“His battle prowess is that of a demigod, but... his regeneration abilities surpass even the Celestial’s!! Dammit, where did he get regeneration abilities like that!? I refuse to believe that he can keep doing it over and over! He has to have limits!” Patriarch Starry Sky stared at Bai Xiaochun through narrowed eyes as he rotated his cultivation base. A moment later, he threw his hand out, causing even more spectacular energy than before to fill the air.

“So, you can stand up to the Spear of the Starry Sky. Very well, try this!” He bit his tongue and spat out a mouthful of blood, which exploded into a blood mist. After the blood mist merged into the starry sky above, the stars began to shine with such intensity that they seemed as bright as daylight!

As the starlight spilled down, it converged upon itself into something ten times as majestic as the Spear of the Starry Sky. The energy which radiated out surpassed anything from before as... a 300,000-meter-long dragon appeared! It was... the Dragon of the Starry Sky!

Roar!

The dragon’s eyes shone like the most brilliant of heavenly bodies, shaking the entire sky as it looked in Bai Xiaochun’s direction and roared.

As it began to speed toward him, Bai Xiaochun looked at it, his own eyes shining brightly.

“Patriarch Starry Sky, it doesn’t matter what divine abilities you use on me. They’re all... useless!” With that, he strode forward, becoming a blazing meteor that shot toward the Dragon of the Starry Sky just as he had gone to meet the spear moments ago.

As he blurred into motion, his right hand clenched into a fist, and he punched out. A black hole sprang into being, sucking in all of the power of his cultivation base and fleshly body. At the same time, a shadowy emperor appeared behind him.

The emperor's head seemed to touch the top of the sky, and his feet were planted firmly on the ground. All creation trembled violently, causing Patriarch Starry Sky's face to fall.

The domineering air which radiated out from that shadowy emperor was terrifying to the ultimate degree!

Bai Xiaochun's fist rocketed toward the Dragon of the Starry Sky, joined by the fist of the shadowy emperor!

This was none other than... the Undying Emperor's Fist!

Mountain-toppling, sea-draining energy was unleashed onto the seemingly unkillable dragon, which let out a howl that shook the entirety of the Wildlands!

The cultivators below were deafened, and their minds spun. Many began to cough up mouthfuls of blood.

Furthermore, the power of Bai Xiaochun's fist strike was so incredible that, apparently, it neared the limits that governed the entire world. As a result, the very same world net appeared in the sky as had appeared during the battle between the gravekeeper and the Celestial!

Chapter 1001: Truce. No fighting.

The Dragon of the Starry Sky howled beneath the world net. Despite how powerful it was, it still felt like it was trembling on the verge of collapse.

However, as it exerted control to keep its body intact, and even prepared to counterattack... Bai Xiaochun's eyes flashed, and his regenerative powers kicked in. Instead of falling back in the face of the dragon, he clenched his fist and... in completely unprecedented fashion, unleashed another Undying Emperor's Fist!

After mastering the Undying Blood, Bai Xiaochun could tell that his Undying Emperor's Fist was not limited in the way it had been in the past. Thanks to his regenerative powers... he could unleash it over and over again!

Three punches. Four punches. Five punches!!

A series of five domineering fist strikes was more than the Dragon of the Starry Sky could take, and its entire 300,000-meter body exploded, sending a blast of energy raging onto Bai Xiaochun.

The force of the detonation shocked even the Giant Ghost King, who considered trying to interfere, but couldn't react quickly enough. This was one of Patriarch Starry Sky's trump cards, something he had planned to use on the Giant Ghost King, but was now forced to use on the troublesome Bai Xiaochun.

From a distance, it was possible to see that the detonation of the Dragon of the Starry Sky created a massive vortex, almost like an enormous mouth that loomed over Bai Xiaochun to swallow him up. The destructive power of that vortex would be shocking to even a demigod, much less any cultivator under that level.

The disciples of the River-Defying Sect were getting very anxious. Song Junwan's face was ashen, and she trembled in fear and disbelief. Patriarch Spirit Stream panted as he stared

nervously at the huge vortex.

However, even as everyone watched in anxiety and anticipation, Bai Xiaochun's voice rang out from inside of the vortex.

“That's all you've got?” he said, striding out into the open. His hair was in complete disarray, and he was seriously injured. However, with each step he took... his aura grew stronger, and his wounds healed.

By the time he emerged fully from within the vortex, he wasn't harmed at all, and his aura was all the way back at its peak.

“Impossible!!” Patriarch Starry Sky gasped, staggering backward in complete disbelief.

He could accept that his Spear of the Starry Sky had been defeated. And he could even handle the destruction of his Dragon of the Starry Sky. But the fact that even the detonation of that dragon hadn't killed Bai Xiaochun was something that seemed to defy all reality. He didn't even look like he had been hurt!

Patriarch Starry Sky's scalp tingled in fear, and his heart pounded in terror. He finally had to admit that this was an enemy he couldn't defeat. Even worse, he was finally coming to the realization that Bai Xiaochun might actually be able to beat him into submission!

“This guy can recover from any injury! None of my divine abilities can do anything to him.... I guess... I've lost the initiative, which means that the next thing which will happen is... he'll attack me....” Having reached this point in his train of thought, Patriarch Starry Sky's eyes began to shine with terror and fear.

All of a sudden, he thought back to a powerful expert from years past, a person who all of the demigods in the lands of Heavenspan had feared. That person... was very much like this Bai Xiaochun, a person with terrifying regenerative capabilities.

“The famed Blood Ancestor....” Patriarch Starry Sky murmured.

He could well imagine that, with regenerative abilities like this, Bai Xiaochun wouldn't necessarily be invincible in this heaven and earth. However, the only people who could possibly be a match for him would be the Celestial or the gravekeeper.

No demigods could possibly qualify to tangle with Bai Xiaochun, not even the most experienced and qualified of them. In fact... it wouldn't even be a certainty that demigods could team up to defeat him!

“The only way to beat him would be to defeat his regenerative powers, or handle him like the Blood Ancestor.... Have the Celestial crush him, pierce through the power of his undying body to directly slaughter his nascent divinity!”

The Giant Ghost King was reacting similarly, and simply couldn't control his facial expression. Bai Xiaochun's powers of regeneration surpassed all imagination, and left the Giant Ghost King completely aghast.

Furthermore, if Patriarch Starry Sky suddenly thought about the Blood Ancestor, then it made even more sense for the Giant Ghost King, one of the four heavenly kings of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, to... think of exactly the same thing!

Years ago, the Blood Ancestor... had vied for the throne with one of the Arch-Emperors, but had eventually ended up dying in the lands of Heavenspan!

Bai Xiaochun could see how shocked the two demigods were. Taking a deep breath, he looked at Patriarch Starry Sky and said, “Any more divine abilities you want to try out? If not, then I guess I'll take my turn.”

“Oh, yes, I have more,” Patriarch Starry Sky said, his eyes bloodshot. Suddenly, he reached up and touched his forehead, causing his divine soul to fly out into the open and shoot up into the starry sky above.

As his divine soul merged with the starry sky, starlight that was even more blinding than anything before began to shine down.

“This is my most powerful divine ability, Bai Xiaochun. Let’s see if your regeneration powers can save you from this!” In the blink of an eye, Patriarch Starry Sky began to descend in the form of a starry sky!

It was as if the heavens were embodied, and falling down toward the earth!

“Most powerful divine ability, huh...?” All of a sudden, the desire to do battle surged strong in Bai Xiaochun. His previous two clashes with Patriarch Starry Sky had been defensive in nature. He hadn’t even tried to unleash a counter attack. But now... he was done holding out. Without any hesitation, he shot up to meet the descending starry sky.

Shouting, he used the Mountain Shaking Bash and the Undying Hex to pick up speed.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as the power of countless heavenly bodies came to focus on Bai Xiaochun. He was shaking on the verge of collapse, and yet, after only a breath of time passed, was fully recovered. And that was when he unleashed his Undying Emperor’s Fist!

If one fist didn't work, he would use ten!

If ten failed, he would use a hundred. Then a thousand. Then ten thousand!

“You will be destroyed!” he shouted. Fist after fist struck, causing the starry sky to tremble violently. Inside, Patriarch Starry Sky’s divine soul was rapidly reaching a point of instability. Gritting his teeth, he rotated his cultivation base to try to hang on, causing destructive power to surge out to meet Bai Xiaochun. However, no matter how badly Bai Xiaochun was injured, his Undying Blood made him terrifyingly resilient!

He quickly recovered from any injury, and his aura always returned to the peak. He seemed completely indomitable, utterly domineering. Everyone watching the scene was dumbstruck. The Giant Ghost King's jaw hung open, and Patriarch Starry Sky was as shocked as if the heavens had collapsed!

Finally, the starry sky shattered.... The stars exploded, and Patriarch Starry Sky's divine soul fled out into the open, terrified!

Bai Xiaochun also appeared, moving so quickly that he transformed into a series of afterimages... that headed directly toward Patriarch Starry Sky's divine soul!

His goal was not to kill him, but to beat him into submission!

Patriarch Starry Sky looked over at Bai Xiaochun, who seemed to be clad in World Raiment, with his will having surpassed the will of the world itself. He seemed impossible to defend against, to the degree that Patriarch Starry Sky's battle spirit immediately vanished. As of this moment, he truly feared Bai Xiaochun!

“Fine, I agree, I agree! It's too tiring fighting you. Truce! A truce!! No fighting!”

Chapter 1002: The Hand Of The Celestial

Patriarch Starry Sky couldn't help but feel a bit depressed about the situation. After all, under normal circumstances, Bai Xiaochun would be so far beneath him that he would likely be able to kill him, given enough time.

But... these were not normal circumstances. Bai Xiaochun's terrifying powers of regeneration essentially negated any injuries. And although his divine abilities and magical techniques were not impossible to defend against, getting hit with them over and over again was profoundly frustrating.

"Fighting with him isn't worth it.... You can't even hurt him!" Patriarch Starry Sky sighed, fairly certain of how the fight would end if it continued to play out.

With that, he flickered into motion, falling back a bit while his divine soul returned to his body. Clearly, he was agreeing to a ceasefire while here outside of Giant Ghost City.

When Bai Xiaochun saw that, he sighed, and then looked over at the Giant Ghost King.

"Now it's your turn, Giant Ghost, old pal."

The Giant Ghost King smiled wryly and shook his head, feeling very much the way that Patriarch Starry Sky did.

"No, I'll do whatever you say. A cease fire it is...."

With the two demigods having made their decision clear, the cultivators on the battlefield began to back away from each other, mixed emotions on their faces.

The cultivators from the River-Defying Sect likewise stood down. As for the disciples from the Spirit and Blood Stream Divisions, they couldn't help but think back to how Bai Xiaochun had single-handedly stopped a battle between their sects all those years ago.

“But can he really stop this war...?” Patriarch Spirit Stream thought.

When Bai Xiaochun saw the two sides backing away from each other, he sighed in relief. At the same time, the hope in his heart grew stronger.

“Stopping this battle is only the first step. The next thing I need to do is go talk to the gravekeeper....” Having reached this point in his train of thought, he turned to leave. However, it was at that point that the entire world shuddered, and massive pressure suddenly began to weigh down on the entire area!

The cultivators from both sides of the conflict were all shocked. Everyone, including the Giant Ghost King and Patriarch Starry Sky, all looked up into the sky.

There, high above everyone’s heads, was... a gigantic eye!

The enormous eye was looking down at the battlefield, and specifically... at Bai Xiaochun!

The presence of the eye made the pressure weighing down seem even more intense. All of a sudden, the countless cultivators down below began to tremble, and felt terror rising up from within their very souls. In fact, they were so shaken that their minds went completely blank.

It was as if the entire world had gone still, and ceased to exist. The only thing that existed was that gigantic eye!

The gaze of the eye was cold to the extreme, like the biting freezing iciness of winter!

It was a gaze that could pierce through anything, and could see into the hearts and minds of everyone, even the devas.

The powerful Giant Ghost King was actually panting as a result of the eye.

“The Celestial....” he murmured, backing up, a look of madness

appearing in his eyes. He rotated his cultivation base immediately, as though the gaze of that eye put him in such unprecedented danger that he instinctively had to protect himself from it.

Patriarch Starry Sky was shaking visibly, but in contrast to the Giant Ghost King, he immediately bowed formally to the eye.

Bai Xiaochun looked up, his aura already unstable, his entire person trembling in terror. He could already tell that the Celestial was more powerful than the last time he had seen him in the north. Although he still was not back to the level he had been when he had fought the gravekeeper, he was close.

Clearly, acquiring the clone of the laughing-crying ghost face had been of great benefit to his recovery.

“Well met... Celestial.” Bai Xiaochun felt as if the Celestial could see every aspect of him, inside and out. Thankfully, he wore the World Raiment, and thus somehow had a bit of the will of the world with him. Because of that, he was able to resist the assault of the gaze to some degree. Clasp hands respectfully, he bowed.

In response to his bow, the gaze of the Celestial suddenly changed. Instead of being ice cold, it became warm in a way that Bai Xiaochun had never experienced before. “Bai. Xiao. Chun....”

When the Celestial spoke, his voice contained... something encouraging, as well as other mixed emotions!

Not only could Bai Xiaochun detect those mixed emotions, but the others in the area could as well.

Far, far away from Giant Ghost City, in the middle of the Heavenspan Sea, right on Heavenspan Island, there at the peak of the mountain, in the Palace of the Dao, the sound of heavy breathing could be heard. Also, two eyes lit up with the brightness of suns.

The aura of the entire world seemed to tremble as those eyes looked out, and waves began to surge on the surface of the

Heavenspan Sea.

“So... he’s appeared. Of all the times to show up, he picks now.” The Celestial sat cross-legged in the Palace of the Dao, a blood-colored flag stretched out in front of him, within which was the sealed soulclone of the ghost face. The laughing-crying appearance of the face inside the flag was bizarre, to say the least.

“So those fluctuations I sensed really did indicate that someone mastered the Undying Codex. This Bai Xiaochun... actually did it!

“He’s ready.... I don’t need to push him anymore. He’s truly ready, even before I’ve made my final decision....

“It seems... that when he went missing, he must have gone into hiding somewhere in the north.... And that apprentice of mine is not dead after all... although that’s not important now....

“I really don’t want to take that final step.... She’s my only flesh and blood, after all....” Looking torn, the Celestial cast his gaze out of the Palace of the Dao in the direction of one of the other mountain peaks on Heavenspan Island. Standing there was Du Lingfei, who seemed so forlorn that she was like a mere husk of her old self, as if her divine soul was dead, and only her physical body remained.

“The war is nearing its end... and I’m not sure if I’ll be able to open the Worldgate. After that damned gravekeeper perishes, will I be able to open the door on my own? Or will it remain closed for all eternity because of his departure? There’s no way to tell ahead of time....

“Perhaps... this really is my last chance... and my best possibility to succeed... an opportunity just waiting to be taken advantage of....” After a long moment passed, the Celestial’s eyes turned as red as blood, and his expression twisted ferociously.

“I have to get out of here! Even if the price were higher, I would still pay it. Considering my talents and qualifications, if I were in

the world beyond, I could easily make another breakthrough. Then I would reach the true Mahayana Realm. In fact, the Archaean Realm might not even be impossible to reach!

“And my current longevity... can no longer be increased by the use of longevity pills....” His expression twisted into an even more ferocious display of determination and madness. Having made his decision, he rose to his feet.

“You’re forcing me to do this, gravekeeper!” He threw his head back and roared, causing the entire world to tremble. The waves on the Heavenspan Sea reached frightening heights. As for Du Lingfei, she shivered, and tears began to stream down her face.... If one looked closely, it would be possible to see two magical symbols hovering deep within her vacant eyes....

“Xiaochun... I'm sorry....” she murmured, her face as pale as death as tears streamed down her cheeks.

In that moment, the Celestial reached out in the direction of Giant Ghost City and made a grasping motion!

A massive vortex sprang into being, with one side on Heavenspan Island, and the other... in the air above Giant Ghost City!

What had once appeared to be the eye of the Celestial transformed into that other vortex, which span furiously as a huge hand reached out of it toward Bai Xiaochun!

Chapter 1003: Another Showdown!

The Celestial's hand was descending from the heavens!

It seemed to supplant all creation, as though the only things in existence were that vortex... and that hand, which thrummed with enough power to destroy the world!

The hand grew larger and larger, until it seemed that it would surpass the vortex. The lands quaked from the pressure, and crevices began to open up everywhere.

It was even possible to see the fingerprints on the hands, which were almost like enormous mountains and valleys, all of which threatened to crush the world.

Intense fluctuations spread out in all directions, causing all the cultivators to be so shocked that they could do nothing other than stare blankly.

It wasn't just the people near Giant Ghost City who could see this amazing scene. In the cities belonging to the three other heavenly kings, cultivators on all sides of the conflict could see what was happening!

Although the vortex and the hand were not large enough to cover all of the Wildlands, they were large enough to cover nearly seventy percent of it. It was truly an astonishing sight.

“What is that?!?!”

“Heavens! That's... that's a huge hand....”

“The Celestial! It's definitely the Celestial!!” Cries of alarm rose up from both Wildlanders and Heavenspan cultivators alike. However, it only took a moment for the Heavenspan cultivators to start getting excited.

“The Celestial is making a move! We're definitely going to win the war!!” As such cries rang out, the soul cultivators and savage

giants suddenly looked profoundly worried.

In fact, their eyes began to glitter with despair.

The Nine Serenities King, War Champion King, and even Xu Shan's father, the Spirit Advent King, were all deeply shocked. As for their opponents, the demigod patriarchs from the other three riversource sects, they couldn't control their reactions.

“That’s... the direction of Giant Ghost City!”

“What’s happening in Giant Ghost City!?!?”

“Something strange is going on!!”

Virtually everyone in the Wildlands was completely focused on that enormous hand emerging from the vortex.

A very serious expression could be seen on the face of the Grand Heavenmaster as he stared out of Arch-Emperor City and up into the sky. As for the reigning Arch-Emperor, he stood in the imperial palace, eyes flickering with intense hatred.

Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun hovered in the air above Giant Ghost City, hardly able to breathe as he stared up at the vortex and the hand. Already, a sense of deep foreboding filled him.

As that sensation grew more and more intense, it reached the point where he was sure something catastrophic was about to happen.

“The Celestial... is going to attack me!!” Bai Xiaochun had no time to try to figure out why the Celestial would do such a thing. Without any hesitation, he prepared to flee.

However, the hand was too big. It was far larger than Patriarch Starry Sky’s magic of the starry sky. After all, that starry sky was a Daoist magic, whereas the Celestial’s hand contained the power of the world itself!

Even as Bai Xiaochun prepared to flee, the hand began to close in on him. Clearly, it didn’t matter where in the world he went, that

hand would catch him!

A look of shock could be seen on the Giant Ghost King's face, and Patriarch Starry Sky was stunned. By now, both of them could tell that the Celestial's hand... was going after Bai Xiaochun!!

"The Blood Ancestor...." All of a sudden, both of them thought back to what the Celestial had done to the Blood Ancestor years ago. Of the two demigods, the Giant Ghost King reacted the most dramatically.

"Get to Arch-Emperor City!!" he shouted. "The Celestial is going to try to kill you!!"

Bitterness gripped Bai Xiaochun's heart as he thought about how he had never done anything to offend the Celestial too badly. Furthermore, he was in a relationship with his daughter, Du Lingfei. He just wanted to stop this war, and had been just getting ready to go talk to the gravekeeper about opening the Worldgate to let the Celestial leave.

Although he had made an agreement with the Frigid Matriarch, Bai Xiaochun had pointed out from the beginning that he didn't have any beef with the Celestial, and therefore, wouldn't take the initiative to try to kill him.

He didn't like fighting and killing. He only wanted to figure out a way to resolve all of the issues everyone had with each other....

"He... wants to kill me!" However, despite his bitterness, he wasn't very surprised.... It was as if, based on all his experiences, he had somehow been prepared for this on a very deep level.

Whether it was his relationship with the gravekeeper and Bai Hao, or the matters pertaining to the world treasure and the Frigid Matriarch... the Celestial had plenty of reasons to want to attack him.

Rumbling sounds echoed out as the hand got closer and closer, filling the sky. In turn, Bai Xiaochun fled, although it didn't seem

to do him any good.

In that critical moment, he drew upon the full power of the Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformation.

“Damn you, Celestial!!” he howled. Aware that fleeing would do no good, he decided to do the only thing possible: fight back.

Meanwhile, in the most ultimate reserve power of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, the magical treasure that was Arch-Emperor City, deep in the third subterranean level of the city....

Within the ruins, in a place that had been buried ever since the original war between the Heavenspan region and the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, there was a crumbling pagoda. Inside of that pagoda sat an old man.

He wore a long black robe, and had hair so white and old that it emanated an aura of decay. His face was crisscrossed with wrinkles, and he emanated a powerful aura of death. Were it not for the fact that his eyes were open, and glittering dully, he could easily be mistaken for a corpse.

However, despite the glittering of his eyes, he still seemed like he was mostly dead, an oil lamp just on the verge of winking out. He might be able to survive for a bit longer, but soon, would return to dust.

He was none other than... the gravekeeper!

He had lived for many, many years, as if he had been born along with the very world in which he lived. He had seen many changes throughout his life, and had seen many generations come and go. Generations were born, and generations died... but he remained. It was an enormous weight to bear.

In his spectacular battle with the Celestial and Ghostmother's soulclone, heaven and earth had been significantly damaged. He had used his magic of the Five Yin Organs, calling up metal, wood, water, fire, and earth in a way that weakened him even more than

he already had been.

Afterward, he had passed his title on to Bai Hao. At the moment, he only had a tiny bit of energy left... energy which might vanish at any moment. In fact, he couldn't even move. He could only sit there cross-legged.

That was the reason why he hadn't appeared during the true battle between the Celestial and Ghostmother on the ghost galleon. It wasn't that he didn't want to; he simply couldn't.

However, in the moment that the Celestial made his move in the Wildlands, the decrepit gravekeeper took a breath. Then he slowly looked up. It seemed to take profound effort, but as he did, his eyes began to shine with increasingly bright light.

He was like kindling that had been sparked into flame. His lips twitched as though he were speaking, although no words could be heard.

Back outside of Giant Ghost City, the Celestial's hand continued on toward Bai Xiaochun, who was struggling to fight back.... But then, the lands shook, and powerful fluctuations spilled out everywhere as... the earth broke apart, revealing an enormous hand that reached upward!

This new hand seemed comparable to the Celestial's hand in all ways. As the lands collapsed, the hand shot up and slammed into the Celestial's hand!

The Wildlands shook violently as a huge boom echoed out. A massive shockwave rippled out into all the cultivators watching the event. Thankfully, the demigods and devas were there to absorb some of the energy, otherwise all of the other cultivators would have been either seriously injured or killed.

“Gravekeeper, you old bastard!!”

“Celestial....”

Two voices filled all creation, one shaking with rage, the other

quivering with extreme weariness!

Chapter 1004: Your Destiny!

As the two voices echoed out through heaven and earth, it felt very much like the last time the Celestial and the gravekeeper had fought each other. And this time, they were fighting a battle the likes of which could end the world!

The Celestial was returning to the Wildlands in much different circumstances than when he had left. He had recovered from his injuries. Furthermore, the gravekeeper was now extremely exhausted.

However... despite how weak he was, he was still the gravekeeper!

As the enormous hand stretched up from the earth and slammed into the Celestial's hand, a massive shockwave rippled out. The sky went dark, and tempests screamed across the lands. Yet again, a certain limit of power was reached, and the protective world net appeared up above!

As the net appeared to fill the sky, Bai Xiaochun's expression flickered. He could clearly sense that because of everything that the world net had experienced throughout the years, it was weakening in many places.

Because of the explosive power being unleashed by the gravekeeper and the Celestial, the only people who could remain in the area were Bai Xiaochun, the Giant Ghost King, and Patriarch Starry Sky.

Only those three could bear witness to the shocking spectacle of the Celestial and the gravekeeper fighting!

However, Bai Xiaochun didn't wish to remain behind. He actually borrowed the momentum of the blast to fall back. The Celestial's hand shifted as if to follow him, but the gravekeeper's hand moved to intercept it again.

The cultivation base power backing those two gargantuan hands vastly surpassed the Demigod Realm. They were in the Mahayana Realm, which was also referred to by some as... the Celestial Realm!

Years ago, Ghostmother had mentioned that Daoist Heavenspan called himself “the Celestial”, but was in fact only a quasi-celestial. Even still, he could unleash power that could change the face of heaven and earth. Therefore, not only did Bai Xiaochun attempt to flee the area, but the Giant Ghost King and Patriarch Starry Sky also began to back away.

They could all tell that the gravekeeper was on his last legs, and wouldn't be able to hold out for very much longer. Patriarch Starry Sky hesitated for a moment as he considered whether or not to stop Bai Xiaochun from fleeing. However, considering how the Giant Ghost King was glowering at him, he simply sighed and decided not to make things complicated....

After all, even he was a bit frightened by the sudden and unexpected appearance of the Celestial.

“You are weak, gravekeeper,” the Celestial said, his voice laced with arrogance. “You should be in the Underworld River, waiting to die. How dare you show up here and try to interfere with my plans!” The golden light of Heavenspan River water shone out in all directions as the Celestial's hand once again shot toward the gravekeeper's hand.

As the resulting boom echoed out, and Bai Xiaochun accelerated in the opposite direction, a fourth boom could be heard. Looking over his shoulder, he was shocked to see that the earthly hand of the gravekeeper was collapsing into pieces.

As for the Celestial's golden hand, it once again filled all heaven and earth as it headed toward Bai Xiaochun.

“You can't escape, Bai Xiaochun.... The gravekeeper is forcing me to do this.... It is not my wish, but I have no choice. Therefore...

you will submit, and become the medicinal pill I need!”

Bai Xiaochun knew that he couldn't escape, and as he stared back at the Celestial's enormous hand, he had no time to think of anything other than fight!

“Godkiller!!” Eyes bloodshot, he called upon the trump card that came with his Undying Blood. Now that he had mastered the Undying Codex, he could control the Godkiller technique, and would not lose consciousness when using it.

As blood qi surged in his body, and he accelerated rapidly, the Celestial laughed coldly.

“The Arch-Ancestor's secret Undying Codex.... If you had the Live Forever Codex, then not even I would be able to fight you.... But without it, you have no way of escaping the destiny I have prepared for you!” The enormous hand formed from Heavenspan Seawater sent golden light shining out that suppressed Bai Xiaochun's blood qi and completely ignored the Godkiller technique.

“Damn you, Celestial!!” Bai Xiaochun howled, throwing his hands out in front of him. Instantly, water vapor erupted out in all directions, turning the area into a huge swamp. Suddenly, a howl erupted into the air that seemed to come from the ancient past, a howl that combined with Bai Xiaochun's shout to shake everything in the area.

Curved mountain peaks rose up from that swamp, the manifestation of none other than... the Waterswamp Kingdom.

Bai Xiaochun's cultivation base now was in the great circle of the Deva Realm, which meant that his Waterswamp Kingdom was vastly more powerful than before. As the mountain peaks arced through the air, a huge beast hand appeared in full, rushing to meet the golden hand of the Celestial.

Unfortunately... the fact that Bai Xiaochun was a deva meant

that he was vastly below the Celestial. When the Waterswamp Kingdom met the Celestial's hand, a huge boom echoed out. The Celestial snorted coldly, and the beast hand shattered. A howl of pain and rage erupted out from the watery swamp, which roiled violently, as if the creature inside wished to free itself.

But the Celestial's hand was too powerful. Thrumming with energy, it continued onward toward Bai Xiaochun!

Soon, the entire 5,000-kilometer-area around Bai Xiaochun was nothing more than that hand, closing around him!

The air shattered as though it were corporeal, causing cracking sounds to echo out. Meanwhile, Bai Xiaochun's vision was obscured, allowing him to see only the five, mountain-like fingers surrounding him.

Compared to the size of that hand, he was like nothing more than a bug!

If the world were likened to a sea, then the Celestial's hand would be reaching down into that water to pick up the tiny shrimp larva that was Bai Xiaochun.

There was literally nothing he could do to fight back or resist!

Blood sprayed out of his mouth because of the intense pressure weighing down on him, and cracking sounds rang out as his bones began to shatter. The watery swamp around him was thoroughly defeated by the golden hand, and simply collapsed!

There was simply no way for Bai Xiaochun to escape, and as such, a feeling of despair began to grip his heart.

However, even as the hand closed in around him... black water suddenly appeared out of nowhere!

In the blink of an eye, it created a shocking Underworld River! A stream of energy erupted from the river, wrapping around Bai Xiaochun as if to take him away.

“The new Hell-Emperor?” the Celestial said. “If you had 10,000 years to prepare, you might qualify to face me, but right now... you’re simply courting death!” The Heavenspan Seawater that made up the enormous hand exploded, creating a powerful attack that slammed into the Underworld River and crushed it. Bai Xiaochun could even hear a muffled cry of anguish and pain from Bai Hao.

“Hao’er!!”

In the blink of an eye, the Heavenspan Seawater overwhelmed the Underworld River water and drove it away. The only thing left was the Celestial’s huge hand, closing in around Bai Xiaochun!

As it closed into a fist, it seemed prepared to crush anything within its grasp out of existence!

In that moment, Bai Xiaochun went mad. Although he was already grievously injured, his powers of regeneration defied imagination. Without any hesitation, he resorted to the Cloud Lightning Forefather Transformation!

“Eleventh Transformation!!”

As he grew larger, rocks began to fly toward him as he used... the Living Mountain Incantation!

His fleshly body power skyrocketed, combining with his cultivation base to somehow manage to keep him going. However, he couldn’t hold on for very long. A moment later, his Forefather Transformation and Living Mountain Incantation collapsed, and he was badly injured. With his regeneration powers, he recovered, but in a moment, was back to being injured.

It was a seemingly endless cycle. In the briefest of moments, he went back and forth from being injured to his peak state about a hundred times! And there seemed to be no end in sight!

Chapter 1005: A Second Chance

“The Undying Codex truly is extraordinary!” When the Celestial saw how Bai Xiaochun was able to fight back against someone vastly more powerful than himself, and consistently regenerate despite his injuries, he was quite moved.

“Thankfully, this isn’t my first time encountering someone who has mastered the Undying Codex....” Back on Heavenspan Island, the Celestial’s eyes suddenly flickered with a crystalline glow.

As he did, Du Lingfei shivered. Even as she stood there, as mute and numb as the walking dead, a crystalline light suddenly shot out from the depths of her eyes, and the two bizarre magical symbols that existed there.

There was a strange power inside of her that the Celestial seemed capable of drawing upon because of those magical symbols. Back outside of Giant Ghost City, as his hand remained closed around Bai Xiaochun, a crystalline glow suddenly appeared.

In the blink of an eye... the entire hand turned crystal, and then crushed down harder!

Rumbling sounds echoed out as Bai Xiaochun, his hair wild and disheveled, called out to the world treasure of the north. Unfortunately, the Frigid Matriarch was still sleeping, and didn’t respond. Worse, it seemed that because of the incredible pressure weighing down on him, his regenerative powers were faltering!

Whatever magical technique was involved with this crystal seemed to be at complete odds with the Undying Codex!

Without his regenerative powers working fully, Bai Xiaochun couldn’t stand up to the raw power of the Celestial. A popping sound rang out, and he was crushed!

At that point, he couldn’t remain conscious, and passed out.

The Celestial began to slowly retract his hand. As it headed back

toward the vortex... everyone in the area looked on, completely shaken.

Devas and demigods alike were completely floored!

Everyone from the River-Defying Sect was trembling, and many of them had their hands clenched tightly into fists at their sides. Song Junwan's face was wet with tears, and yet there was nothing she could do except watch while everything happened. When the vortex disappeared, she coughed up a mouthful of blood and then toppled forward, unconscious.

As the Celestial's hand vanished, his voice rang out to fill the Wildlands, cold and emotionless in all aspects.

“All Heavenspan cultivators are to join forces... and exterminate every living thing in the Wildlands!”

The Celestial did not like being in a passive position. He preferred to be in control. That much was possible to see from how things had played out with the bone galleon.

This current matter was playing out exactly the same. All of his hopes were wrapped up with Bai Xiaochun, and although he was only about eighty percent confident in being able to succeed, that didn't mean he would let his guard down. Since there were still two paths available... he would leave both open to pick from!

“If neither path works... then since my longevity is running out, I will just bury this world along with me!” With that, his hand vanished completely.

The cultivators from the Heavenspan region were shaken. However, no matter how tired they were from all the fighting, they had to follow the orders of the Celestial. And of course, there were some who were very enthusiastic about following such orders, and immediately began to fight with murderous fervor!

The morale of the Wildlanders had suffered a severe blow upon the defeat of the gravekeeper. From what they could tell, there was

absolutely no way out for them now....

The lands of Heavenspan would accept no captives. The Celestial wanted everything in the Wildlands dead, all the way down to the grass and the roots!

Savages and soul cultivators alike, even the animals, would all be killed.

The only choice the Wildlanders had now... was to fight to the death!!

The sound of battle resumed, accompanied by bitter chuckling, roaring laughter, and the sounds of self-detonation.... Blood once again began to stain the ground, and the death count rose.... It seemed as if the end of days had come; the sky was dark, and the lands were shattered. It wouldn't take long before Giant Ghost City fell, as well as the other three kingly cities. When that happened, the Wildlanders would be forced to retreat... all the way to Arch-Emperor City!

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Far beneath the surface of Heavenspan Island was... an enormous necropolis!

In the depths of the necropolis was a pool of black liquid surrounded by a huge spell formation, fully 30,000 meters from side to side. It was a spell formation created, not by spirit stones, but by human bones!

Some of the bones were golden, and some were crystalline... and despite being dead, all of them seemed to radiate an air of holiness!

Around the perimeter of the pool of liquid were three deep pits, each of which contained a skeleton!

Shockingly, all of those skeletons were partially gold and partially crystal. Although none were perfectly fused together, the pressure they emitted was enough to cause even demigods to tremble. That pressure... was extremely close to the level of the

quasi-celestial Daoist Heavenspan.

Although none of them were quite as powerful as him, all of them were only about half a step from being in the true Mahayana Realm!

If the reigning Arch-Emperor were able to see this place, he would instinctively recognize who those three corpses were.

They were... the remains of the three most powerful Arch-Emperors of the past!

Clearly, the Celestial had located their sepulchers and exhumed their skeletons, then used them to create the most ultimate of spell formations!

The rotting, holy bones had been collected throughout the years from people who had cultivated either the Undying Codex or the Live Forever Codex!

In the very middle of the spell formation, within the black pool of water, Bai Xiaochun sat cross-legged, his eyes closed. He was breathing, but not conscious. The water swirled slowly around him, rippling as magical symbols slowly floated about within.

The magical symbols almost seemed alive, and many of them would crawl up onto Bai Xiaochun and move around on the surface of his body.

It was a very ghastly scene, made even worse by the flickering lamps which lit the area.

All of a sudden, Bai Xiaochun shivered, and then opened his eyes. As soon as he did, the magical symbols that had been crawling all over him flew back into the water, apparently having been startled.

At first, his expression was blank. However, as he breathed, his eyes began to glitter. Then he looked around at the pool of water, and the bones that made up the spell formation.

He wanted to rise to his feet, but soon found that he couldn't control his own body. It was impossible for him to leave the pool of water. Apparently, the energy of the Undying Codex and Live Forever Codex in the bones around him created an aura that disturbed his mind.

At that point, a raspy voice filled the air. "Don't struggle. This pool of water... is made from the blood of countless descendants of the Arch-Emperor, back when I drove his dynasty out of the lands of Heavenspan. It's been fermenting here for many, many years." Bai Xiaochun then saw the air up ahead ripple, and the Celestial walk slowly out into the open.

The Celestial's eyes burned with excitement and anticipation as he looked at Bai Xiaochun, as if he were some consummately important medicinal pill to be consumed.

Panting, Bai Xiaochun looked at the Celestial, his heart pounding with foreboding. Just when he was about to say something, the Celestial looked around at the bones and kept talking.

"I killed many of these people myself in the final battle at Arch-Emperor City. And some... are cultivators I ran tests on after I started researching the Undying Live Forever Technique.

"Sadly, despite the fact that the Undying Live Forever Technique is something that anyone can cultivate, for some reason, I am not able to. Perhaps it's because I've killed so many people with the blood of the Arch-Emperor in them.

"I can only research it by having other people cultivate the technique. I even exhumed the corpses of these three Arch-Emperors, and brought their skeletons here to learn a thing or two from them.

"You see, I stole the Live Forever Codex from the Arch-Emperor Dynasty. And as for the Undying Codex, the gravekeeper made it public for some reason. Perhaps it was an attempt to resist me, or perhaps an attempt to continue the line of the Arch-Emperor

Dynasty. In any case, I added fuel to the fire by making sure the Undying Codex was available in the lands of Heavenspan as well.... The trickiest thing was the Live Forever Codex. It is very, very difficult to cultivate. In fact, few people have ever managed to master it. Most would fail along the way, after which I would place their remains in here to make the best use of them.

“Over all the years, only two people have ever completely cultivated it. One of them was an apprentice of mine, and the other... is my daughter.” By this point, the Celestial didn't really seem to be talking to Bai Xiaochun, but rather, muttering to himself.

As Bai Xiaochun listened, his shock mounted until he felt like his head was being struck by lightning. After seeing Du Lingfei's bones years ago, he had already begun to suspect the truth. But to hear the Celestial say it out loud was a different matter.

“Sadly, I wasn't quite prepared last time. Furthermore, my apprentice discovered what was going on. Therefore, my first attempt to concoct an Undying Live Forever Pill was a failure before I even started. But that doesn't matter. I have a second chance now....”

With that, he turned to look at Bai Xiaochun with glittering eyes.

“Fei'er,” he said.

At that point, Du Lingfei stepped out from behind the Celestial.

Upon seeing Du Lingfei, a bitter smile spread out across Bai Xiaochun's face. He understood. He understood everything....

Chapter 1006: Reasons

Or perhaps the truth was slightly different. Upon seeing Du Lingfei, Bai Xiaochun smiled bitterly, and was fairly certain that he understood.

Many years ago, the Celestial rebelled, waging war against the entire Arch-Emperor Dynasty. The forces of the Arch-Emperor were soundly defeated, losing not just the lands of Heavenspan, but also one of their most important legacies, the Live Forever Codex from the Undying Live Forever Technique!

After relocating to the Wildlands, the Arch-Emperor Dynasty only had the Undying Codex. Perhaps in an attempt to resist the Celestial, or perhaps just to foster hope... the gravekeeper had taken steps to allow people who were not direct descendants of the Arch-Emperor to cultivate the Undying Codex. And as the technique became more widespread, incomplete copies eventually showed up in sects in the lands of Heavenspan.

As a result, the Undying Codex lived on. At the same time, everyone in the Heavenspan Realm had a chance to cultivate a secret magic that had once belonged only to the Arch-Emperor.

The Celestial didn't do anything to stop it, focused as he was on the Live Forever Codex. However, it was only after attempting to actually cultivate the Live Forever Codex, and failing, that he came up with an idea that could only be described as insane.

He would encourage more and more people to cultivate both the Undying Codex and the Live Forever Codex. Then he would fuse those people together and use them to concoct an Undying Live Forever Pill. By consuming that pill, he would then get access to the hidden power offered by the Undying Live Forever Technique.

Both the bones scattered in the necropolis, and the remains of the three Arch-Emperors, had all been used in his extensive research.

Unfortunately for him, the Live Forever Codex was much more difficult to cultivate than the Undying Codex, and also more powerful. Despite all the years which had passed, none of the countless cultivators who had cultivated it had ever succeeded. At most, some of them made superficial progress.

But then his top apprentice came along.... She was the Frigid Matriarch of the north, and once she mastered the Live Forever Codex, the Celestial's heart began to burn with avarice.

It was at around that time that a mighty hero rose up in the Wildlands, a person called the Blood Ancestor. Perhaps it was his own spectacular talent, or perhaps he had the blood of the Arch-Emperors in him. Either way, he mastered the Undying Codex, and made a spectacular breakthrough, reaching the fleshly body level of a demigod!

If it wasn't for the fact that the Celestial had brought ruin to the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, it was entirely possible that the Blood Ancestor would have eventually gone on to cultivate the Live Forever Codex.

If the Blood Ancestor had succeeded with both codices, then he would have been able to break through to the Celestial Realm!

He would have met the qualifications enforced by the gravekeeper to leave the Heavenspan Realm!

The Frigid Matriarch should have been the Blood Ancestor's greatest enemy. But somehow, they fell in love with each other. And when they discovered the truth of the Celestial's schemes... well, Bai Xiaochun had already been told that story by the Frigid Matriarch herself.

The Frigid Matriarch betrayed her Master, and joined with the Blood Ancestor to try to kill him!

In the end, the Blood Ancestor died, and sank to the bottom of the Heavenspan River, with only one, defiant hand stretching out

above the surface of the water.... The Frigid Matriarch also perished. However, she managed to create a soulclone that possessed a true spirit. Afterward, she remained hidden in the Spirit Stream Sect, forever gazing into the distance at the Blood Ancestor... her Daoist partner.

Because of how things played out... the Celestial's first chance to concoct the pill he desired ended in a failure.

But the Celestial didn't give up. In the years that passed, he tried to come up with other ways to escape the world in which he was trapped. But at the same time, he kept the Undying Live Forever Pill in his back pocket, ready to use as a last resort.

If no one else came along who could master the Live Forever Codex, then perhaps the Celestial would have been forced to eventually abandon his insane plan. But then, his daughter, Du Lingfei... became the second person who was able to cultivate the technique!

Du Lingfei's bones slowly became crystal. And although she didn't advance by leaps and bounds like Bai Xiaochun had done with the Undying Codex, her rapid advancement in her cultivation proved that she wasn't very far behind him.

After all... she had the backing of the Celestial, and therefore, it was only natural that her cultivation would go easier than it would for others.

The Celestial was not completely cold-hearted when it came to the fact that his daughter was succeeding with the Live Forever Codex. On the one hand, he deeply desired to escape the Heavenspan Realm. But on the other hand, he still hesitated at the thought of sacrificing his own child.

It was that hesitation which led to the spectacular battle in the Wildlands, and his alliance with Ghostmother's soulclone. All of it had been an attempt to either kill the gravekeeper, or escape to the world beyond by using Ghostmother's battleship.

Unfortunately for him, all of his plans had failed. The Celestial began to descend into utter madness, and at the same time, constantly muttered, “Gravekeeper, you bastard, you’re forcing me to do all of this!!”

As far as the Celestial was concerned, the gravekeeper really was forcing him down this path. It wasn’t what he truly wanted, but he felt that he had no other choice. And thus, he had gone to war with the Wildlands.

He would end all life in the Wildlands, kill the gravekeeper, dispel the Underworld River, and end the bloodline of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty. In the middle of all that, Bai Xiaochun became the next person after the Blood Ancestor to master the Undying Codex!

In the end, the Celestial had two choices. Sacrifice his own flesh and blood, or watch his longevity run out, and his hopes of escaping the Heavenspan Realm be dashed to pieces. Finally, he picked the former.... And considering how his initial attempt at this plan had failed, as soon as he made his decision, he placed a magical slave seal on Du Lingfei!

Then he simply waited for Bai Xiaochun to show up. After confirming that Bai Xiaochun had succeeded with the Undying Codex, he made his move. There was no one to stand in his way, and thus, he brought Bai Xiaochun from the Wildlands to Heavenspan Island.

Bai Xiaochun watched bitterly as Du Lingfei stepped out from behind the Celestial. Her expression was vacant, making her seem almost like a marionette or puppet. Furthermore, deep within her eyes, it was just possible to see the flickering slave seals.

“Boo....” he said, thinking back to how the Celestial had used the both of them to lure out the ghost face. He would never forget the disappointment and bitterness he had seen in her expression back then.

“Don’t hate me....” the Celestial said. “I never wanted to do this. It’s all the fault of the gravekeeper!!” Suddenly, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously, although it was possible to detect bitter sadness within the laughter, as well as madness.

The Celestial had truly gone crazy. It was visible in his eyes, as well as his smile, which looked completely different than it had in the past. Eyes bloodshot, he performed a right-handed incantation gesture and then pointed at Du Lingfei!

In response, Du Lingfei shivered and looked up slowly. Expression blank, she began to walk slowly toward Bai Xiaochun, who could do nothing other than watch her approach. When she stepped into the blood in the pool, it immediately stained her white garments black. At the same time, the greedy magical symbols began to crawl onto her and pass to and fro on her skin.

She stopped right in front of him, where she slowly reached out... and put her hand on top of his head. As she did, she began to glow with crystalline light....

At that point, the aura of the Live Forever Codex erupted out.

Chuckling endlessly, the Celestial shoved his right hand down onto the ground, causing the entire necropolis to tremble. The spell formation began to radiate dazzling light, and the bones which formed it melted. Even the remains of the three Arch-Emperors started melting away....

The melting of the bones caused the spell formation to glow even brighter. At the same time, the black blood began to bubble and seethe, sending more magical symbols wriggling onto Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei!

They began to pour into their eyes, ears, noses and mouths. The pain caused Bai Xiaochun to shiver, but what was worse was the anguish and rage he felt!

His anguish was because of what was happening to Du Lingfei,

and his rage was because of the cruelty of the Celestial!

“Am I going to die...?” he thought. Again, he tried to call out to the Frigid Matriarch, but there was no response. Magical symbols rushed into him, causing him to glow with golden light that seemed to correlate perfectly to the crystalline glow coming off of Du Lingfei.

A resonance formed with the light of the spell formation, whereupon a shocking gravitational force erupted from Du Lingfei!

The gravitational force spread through Du Lingfei and into Bai Xiaochun, causing him to shiver. Looking dully at Du Lingfei, he... slowly closed his eyes.

However, when that happened, a look of intense struggle appeared in Du Lingfei's eyes. A tremor ran through her, and suddenly she seemed like she might lift her hand off of his head. Apparently, despite the slave seal that had been placed on her, she instinctively refused to harm Bai Xiaochun!

Chapter 1007: A Teardrop

The human body was still capable of reacting even under the control of a slave seal. Clearly, Du Lingfei had a tenacious determination in her heart to avoid hurting Bai Xiaochun.

When Bai Xiaochun felt the hand on the top of his head trembling, he opened his eyes to see Du Lingfei's face twitching. Furthermore, the magical slave seals in her eyes were flickering dramatically.... A moment passed, and then, she moved her hand away!

"Boo...." he murmured. Off to the side, mixed emotions could be seen in the Celestial's eyes. However, he quickly wiped them away with madness. Reaching his hand out, he pointed at his daughter.

She shivered, and the slave seals overwhelmed any sensation of pain she felt. She went still, and then... calmly put her hand back down on Bai Xiaochun's head.

She looked at him with eyes that didn't contain even a scrap of emotion, and yet, Bai Xiaochun could still sense her inner pain.

His lips parted as if he were about to say something, but instead, he stayed silent. This time, he didn't close his eyes. He knew that his life was nearing its end, and therefore, in that final moment before he died, he would create an eternal memory of what he was seeing.

Rumbling sounds filled the necropolis as the bones melted into the spell formation. Then, an explosive force left Du Lingfei's hand and entered Bai Xiaochun's head.

Intense pain raged through him as his life force, cultivation base, flesh, blood, and soul all began to rush toward Du Lingfei!

It was as if his body were being destroyed. His bones, blood, energy passageways, and everything else that made him up were being transformed into the ultimate type of life force....

That life force was what the Celestial needed, and what was currently rushing toward Du Lingfei....

Bai Xiaochun was the undying medicine, and Du Lingfei... was the pill furnace that could live forever....

After that pill furnace sucked in the medicine, it would sacrifice itself, withering up into death to produce... an Undying Live Forever Pill!

“Soon,” the Celestial muttered. “Very soon now.... I've been waiting my whole life to get this Undying Live Forever Pill....” He began chuckling loudly, his expression twisted and distorted in bizarre fashion as he watched his daughter absorbing Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun was shaking violently, and was wracked with unprecedented levels of pain. He had endured much pain to cultivate the Undying Codex, but none of that could even come close to comparing to what he was feeling now.

He was beginning to wither up. His hair was even turning dry and brittle. His Undying Blood began to fade away, and his Undying Bones were turning dull and dark. His Undying Tendons, Undying Flesh, and Undying Skin... were all melting....

He couldn't struggle or fight back. As he was emptied out, as his life force was sucked away, he slowly began to lose consciousness.

He suddenly thought back to everything he had done in the Wildlands. He thought of Bai Hao, the Giant Ghost King, Mistress Red-Dust and Zhou Yixing.... Then he thought of the River-Defying Sect....

He pictured Li Qinghou, Song Junwan, Master God-Diviner... and so many other faces. They seemed so vivid to him that he was sure he could reach out and touch them.

“The River-Defying Sect....” he murmured in a voice that only he and the dead could hear. As he weakened, his hair began to fall out,

transforming into dust before it could even touch the surface of the black blood.

By now, he was so withered that he was like a candle flickering on the verge of winking out....

He wasn't thinking about the River-Defying Sect anymore.... He was thinking about the eastern Lower Reaches... and the Spirit Stream Sect. It was as if all the memories of his life were flowing past him. He saw himself in front of the stone steles of plants and vegetation. He saw himself licking his lips as he eyed some spirit tail chickens....

He saw himself with Big Fatty Zhang. He saw his Master, who had perished before even taking him as an apprentice. He saw Hou Xiaomei. He saw so many things....

By now, he couldn't breathe. He looked like brittle skin wrapped over dry bones. Rotting patches of death were spreading out to cover him... and his teeth began to fall out. As of this moment, he looked like a desiccated corpse that had been left in the grave for years and years....

The hand on top of his head was like a black hole sucking away at everything that was him, and filling him with a pain that he had already grown used to.

The Undying Codex was now eighty percent extracted from him, and it was the same with his life force. In his fading consciousness, he no longer saw the Spirit Stream Sect, but instead... Mount Hood.

On top of the mountain was a boy who was somehow holding seven or eight axes and cleavers, all at the same time. At the top of the mountain, he tossed the weapons aside... and even as thunder crashed in the sky, he lit a stick of incense.

It was a comical sight that made him want to smile. But he couldn't control his body, and was thus incapable. Perhaps that

was a good thing, considering his current appearance. Smiling would have made him look even more horrifying.

As his consciousness continued to fade, he was fairly certain he could sense his soul beginning to rise up from inside of him, toward an all-consuming vortex....

He only had about ten percent of his life force left.... Cracks had begun to appear on his dried-up skin, to the point where the slightest brush of a hand would likely turn it into ash. It was the same with his five yin organs and six yang organs.

The power of the Undying Codex was now almost completely gone. Only a tiny scrap of it remained in his bones, which caused the faintest glimmer of gold to be visible through the ragged openings in his skin....

In that moment, he saw what would likely be the last image he ever saw.... A child crouched next to a bed, tears streaming down his face. As his parents began to breathe their last breaths, he began to weep, and then to wail....

“Xiaochun,” a weak voice murmured, “don’t be afraid....” A cold hand came to rest on his forehead. “Take this stick of incense.... Haven’t you always dreamed of becoming an immortal...? Here, take it....”

The boy looked up through his tears to take the incense. Then, the hand which had moments ago lifted the incense up to him slowly dropped down. The boy’s tears flowed even harder.

The boy remained at the bedside in a daze. Eventually, the neighbors came into the room and carried him out. He saw many sympathetic gazes as his parents’ bodies were carried away.... The boy sat down in a corner, wrapped his arms tightly around his knees, and looked at the incense....

“Why do people die...? I... I want to live! I want all the people around me to live.... I want everyone to be happy! I want... to live

forever!”

The boy's voice echoed away into silence inside of Bai Xiaochun's mind, a figment of eternity....

He felt more tired than he ever had been in his entire life....

However, in that moment right before his consciousness disappeared... a teardrop fell down onto the parched skin of his arm. As it was absorbed into his skin, it seemed to merge into his rapidly devolving consciousness.

“A teardrop....” he murmured. He could sense the bitterness in it. Using his last scrap of energy, he opened his eyes, and could just barely make out... Du Lingfei, struggling against the slave seal. Even if it destroyed her, she was determined to remove her hand from the top of his head! Oh so slowly, her hand began to rise up!

Then she spoke in a voice laced with the utmost despair. “Daddy... I beg you....”

Although her words were spoken softly, they struck the Celestial like lightning. He began to tremble.

Chapter 1008: How Could You Be So Selfish?

The Celestial's heart felt like it was about to be ripped to pieces. Things which had once been the most important in his life, but had vanished along the way, were suddenly brought right back to the forefront thanks to Du Lingfei's words.

He suddenly saw her as a child, tugging at his garments and calling him daddy in her cute, girly voice.... He wasn't sure exactly when it happened, but somewhere along the line... she had stopped calling him daddy, and started calling him father.

"Fei'er...." he said, trembling physically, his pupils constricting.

After all... this was his daughter, his own flesh and blood.

The Celestial was the mighty ruler of the entire world, and yet, had never had many Daoist partners. Over all the years, he had never had a son. Du Lingfei was his only daughter, and in fact, his only child.

The Celestial had been so focused on escaping the Heavenspan Realm that Du Lingfei's mother had never meant much to him. She had long since passed away.

The Celestial's heart was currently being ripped two ways; in one direction by his humanity, and in the other by his desires.

The part that represented his humanity was screaming at him furiously. "You're really willing to sacrifice your own flesh and blood just to live a bit longer? Just to get off of this world? Is it really worth it...?"

On one side was his daughter, and on the other was his longevity, and his deep, insane desire to escape this prison he was in....

Du Lingfei was currently in the middle of a struggle... and so was the Celestial!

"Daddy... please...." Du Lingfei had begun to weep. She trembled

physically as she fought against the slave seal. Every time she pushed against the magic of the seal, intense force slammed into her mind, making it feel like her soul might collapse at any moment. “Daddy, is it worth it...? I'm your daughter!! I beg you, daddy. I beg you....”

And yet, she wouldn't give up. She didn't want to hurt Bai Xiaochun, and also didn't want to see her father like this. In her pain, she was like a helpless child who could do nothing more than beg and plead....

The father she remembered was not like this. Worse, she couldn't remember when he had changed.... When had he become a stranger, a person who would actually hurt her?

Upon parting with Bai Xiaochun in the north, she had returned to Heavenspan Island. Gradually, she came to find that her mind was slowing down, and eventually, she heard a complex, emotional howl from the Palace of the Dao. It was her father, the Celestial. That was when she lost control of her own body. And yet, she never lost her consciousness. Eventually, she watched herself consuming Bai Xiaochun's life force, and watched him dying, and the pain became too much to bear.

“Daddy....” she said, trembling as the slave seal began to slowly collapse as she fought back against it. However, it was at this point that the Celestial looked up, his eyes burning with madness.

“Shut up! Shut the hell up!!” As his shout echoed out like thunder, the madness in his eyes grew even more intense, and all the warmth of humanity that existed inside of him was wiped away!

He shoved his memories of Du Lingfei away as surely as if he had cut them with a blade!

He was no longer Du Lingfei's father. He was the Celestial, someone who didn't care about anything other than his longevity and his hopes for the future!

“Fuse with Bai Xiaochun. That is your mission. Combine the undying with that which can live forever. That is the entire purpose of your existence!” Face twisting with vicious coldness, he waved his finger out in front of him.

The slave seals in Du Lingfei’s eyes glowed so brightly they turned red. It was as if her mind was being suppressed, and as she lost control, she slowly reached back out toward the top of Bai Xiaochun’s head.

As her hand neared, it trembled, and Du Lingfei’s eyes twitched. Despite how furiously the slave seals were controlling her, she was still trying to resist. Crystalline light shone brightly as she murmured, “I... won’t....”

Tears streamed down her face and fell onto Bai Xiaochun. Blue veins bulged out on her face from the effort of speaking, and bloody wounds could be seen as her skin ripped and tore from the effort of fighting against the slave seals. She looked like she was about to collapse both physically and in terms of her divine sense. And yet, she wouldn’t stop fighting.

As of this moment, it was possible to see Du Lingfei’s unswerving determination. She had made her decision. She would rather destroy herself than betray what she believed in!

Bai Xiaochun could barely see what was happening. Virtually all of his life force was gone, and his mind was in chaos. His lips parted to speak, and yet, he didn’t even have the energy to say a single word.

The tears falling onto his parched skin created rippling waves in his heart....

When the Celestial saw that Du Lingfei was about to destroy herself, his anger flared.

“Unfilial bitch!” he shouted, striding forward into the black pool of liquid.

The black liquid began to swirl about even faster, and the magical symbols all shied away from the Celestial.

Ignoring them, he stepped up to Du Lingfei and put his left hand onto her head, and then placed his right hand onto Bai Xiaochun's.

Tightening his fingers, he pushed both of their heads toward each other!

"You know, according to my original plan, after I refined you into an Undying Live Forever Pill and left this prison of a world, I would eventually become an archaean, and then figure out a way to resurrect you....

"Why must you rebel against me? Why?!?!"

"Why do you go so far as to defy me?!?!"

The Celestial's twisted expression was terrifying. He radiated a sensation of complete madness. As for Du Lingfei, she tried to fight back, but was powerless to do so. With the Celestial forcing her head toward Bai Xiaochun's, there was nothing she could do, not even kill herself.

As the Celestial forced Du Lingfei and Bai Xiaochun closer to each other, the radiant golden and crystalline lights began to swirl together with glittering radiance.

"All I wanted you to do was consume Bai Xiaochun!" the Celestial raged. "All I asked you to do was become an Undying Live Forever Pill.... If I had any other choice, I wouldn't do this!" Apparently, it was only by shouting at the top of his lungs that the Celestial could convince himself that what he was saying made sense.

"I can't simply gamble that the Worldgate can be opened after the gravekeeper dies. What if it's sealed for all eternity? At that point, it wouldn't matter if I got the technique! Therefore, I have no choice but to refine you two into a pill now. Then, I can finally acquire the Undying Live Forever Technique, and be unstoppable!

"I can't bet on what I don't know! If the world ends up sealed, I'll

never be able to change it. I have no choice here. If you were in my position, you would do the same thing!!

“With that pill... I will no longer be a quasi-celestial. I will be a true celestial! I will conform to the requirements of the will of this world, and will be able to leave!

“Why are you defying me!?!? You’re just like your Eldest Sister! She defied me too! Why!?!? She did it for the Blood Ancestor, and you for Bai Xiaochun? Why?!?!?

“All I have to do is get out of here and become an archaean! Then I can resurrect you!!

“How can the two of you... be so selfish!!?” The Celestial was screaming so loudly that in the outside world, wild colors flashed in the sky, and raging winds screamed across the Heavenspan Sea, causing huge waves to rise up.

In the depths of the Palace of the Dao, the Celestial’s energy radiated out, provoked by his emotions. The spell formation was reaching its pinnacle of power, and as the black liquid in the pool spun faster and faster, the bones in the necropolis melted, and began to fuse with Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei!

Apparently, the spell formation was now acting like an enormous pill furnace, refining the ingredients therein to create...

An Undying Live Forever Pill!

Chapter 1009: Twenty-Two-Colored Flame!

This was the most intense moment of deadly crisis Bai Xiaochun had ever experienced during his entire life. There was nothing he could do to stop what was happening. He didn't even have the strength to struggle. With the Celestial having physically taken matters into his own hands, it seemed a foregone conclusion how things would end up.

Bai Xiaochun's path of cultivation would end with Du Lingfei, the two of them refined into a medicinal pill by this enormous spell formation, which the Celestial would then use to transcend the bounds of the world in which he lived.

Never could he have imagined that things would end up like this, not even after having been told by the Frigid Matriarch that he would eventually have a falling out with the Celestial.

Bai Xiaochun had always naively believed that because of Du Lingfei, the Celestial wouldn't do anything too harmful to him. Furthermore, he had the gravekeeper and Bai Hao on his side, and a vast array of secret weapons that had filled him with confidence.

Except... all of that had been as realistic as the reflection of the moon on a shimmering lake....

He was losing consciousness, yet strangely, Du Lingfei's aura also gave him a strange sense of clarity.

"What if all of this... is part of the gravekeeper's plan...?" he murmured.

Seemingly in concert with Bai Xiaochun's speculation, the gravekeeper, who sat cross-legged in the pagoda in the ruins of the third level of the subterranean Arch-Emperor City, opened his turbid eyes.

"Bai Xiaochun," he murmured bitterly, "I hope... that you won't hate me. This is my mission... and the mission of the Hell-

Emperor.” His gaze penetrated the void, passing to the ends of the Wildlands, to a huge river that no one could see. There in the inky, endlessly flowing darkness was the antithesis of all of the life force of the Heavenspan Sea. This river... represented death.

Its waters were filled with infinite vengeful souls, all of them howling and screaming as they were carried along by the river water into the cycle of reincarnation....

Its name: the Underworld River.

At the furthest end of the Underworld River... was a pitch-black palace, rife with an aura of death. It was cold beyond belief, without even the slightest hint of a flame anywhere.

It was... the Underworld Palace!

Sitting inside of the palace, clad in imperial robes, was the reigning Hell-Emperor, Bai Hao. Radiating off of him was an intense aura of death.

He normally wore a stern expression, but now, his face was a mask of anxiety. His mood affected the Underworld Palace and the Underworld River, causing waves to spread out across its surface.

He had personally witnessed the Celestial’s enormous hand defeat the gravekeeper, as well as his own attempt to interfere.

He had watched helplessly as the sinister Celestial took Bai Xiaochun away, and although he couldn’t be sure of all the details, he was convinced that his Master was in critical danger!

And he knew that the only person in the world who could save his Master... was himself!

He well knew how weak the gravekeeper was, and that he could pass away into death at any moment. Sadly, Bai Hao also knew that, despite being the Hell-Emperor, he was currently not a match for the Celestial....

“Master....” he murmured bitterly. Many memories floated up in

his mind, memories of the time he had spent with his Master in the Wildlands.

Bai Xiaochun was his only family, and there was no one who Bai Hao felt more gratitude to than him. He had even sworn an oath to protect him with his own life....

His days spent with his Master... were the happiest he had ever experienced.

The memories faded away... leaving behind a single image, an image that would always be a part of his soul.

It was an image of Bai Xiaochun standing there with his back to him, calmly accepting him as an apprentice....

“Master....” Bai Hao murmured, smiling. It was a smile filled with staunch determination!

He knew that if he wanted to go to Heavenspan Island and take his Master away from the Celestial... then there was only one way to do it!

And that was... to concoct something that could break through the limitations of the world itself.... Twenty-two-colored flame!

It hadn't mattered to Bai Hao that Bai Xiaochun was already a deva. He had continued his auguries and research into twenty-two-colored flame. Eventually, he had come to the realization that in this world, the limit for flame conjuring was twenty-one-colored flame.

With the exception of some special circumstances, it would be impossible to succeed with twenty-two-colored flame. According to the limitations of the world, everything from twenty-one-colored flame and below was considered mortal fire. However, everything from twenty-two-colored flame onward was immortal fire!

There could be nothing more powerful in this world than a twenty-two-colored flame, if it appeared. In fact, it could burn anything that existed.

Fire like that could be used to fight the Celestial, and could enable Bai Hao to rescue Bai Xiaochun!

Unfortunately... there were no souls within this world that could be used to concoct a twenty-two-colored flame. Even using all of the souls within the Underworld River would yield nothing more than the limit of twenty-one.

“There’s only one way....” he thought, shivering with fear. After a moment, though, the determination in his eyes grew stronger!

It was a method Bai Hao had come to understand due to two reasons. The first was that Miao Lin’er’s clan had attempted to use him to conjure a flame. The second was that he was now the Hell-Emperor. That method was to use his own soul... to conjure that most consummate of flames... a twenty-two-colored flame!

That was the only way!

And since Bai Hao was the Hell-Emperor, and had complete control of the Underworld River, that meant that he controlled all of the souls that were part of the cycle of reincarnation!

“Master... I can save you....”

As he smiled, tears streamed down his cheeks, but his decision had been made.

The price to pay was enormous, but he could accept it... without any regrets!

Soon, Bai Hao... would cease to exist. And yet... he had no complaints!

Bai Xiaochun was his Master. In the moment that he had kowtowed to become an apprentice, he had decided... that he would do anything to pay back that kindness!

His tears were not corporeal. As they fell from his face, they became a part of the Underworld River. Sighing, he rose to his feet, then threw his hands wide.

“Souls, come to me!” The endless torrent of vengeful souls outside of the Underworld Palace surged and began to head in his direction, forming a massive vortex.

Bai Hao performed an incantation gesture with his left hand, then touched his forehead, which caused his entire body to burst into flames!

It was a one-colored flame....

His hands began to blur with incantation gestures as the surrounding sea of souls spun and spun. One soul after another entered Bai Hao, causing the flames that surrounded him to flicker in astonishing fashion.

Two-colored flame. Three-colored flame. Four-colored flame....

In only a few breaths worth of time, the sea of fire surrounding Bai Hao reached epic proportions. It was soon featured sixteen colors!

And things kept going!

If there was anyone in the entire world who could surpass Bai Xiaochun when it came to conjuring flames... then that person was his apprentice, the Hell-Emperor Bai Hao!

Rumbling sounds continued to echo out as the flames burned around Bai Hao. Countless souls dove madly into him as a seventeenth color appeared, then an eighteenth and a nineteenth....

Things weren't over yet!

The determination in Bai Hao's eyes couldn't have been more intense. Waving both arms out in front of him, he caused the entire Underworld River to shudder from beginning to end.

Twenty colors!

Twenty-one colors!

At that point, Bai Hao looked out into the void and unleashed an

incredible howl.

At that point... his soul began to burn. With that power, along with the souls from the Underworld River, and with the river itself as the base, Bai Hao's eyes slowly lit up with twenty-one colors.... And then, another color appeared!

It was... a twenty-two-colored flame!

Nothing happened out in the Wildlands when the twenty-two-colored flame appeared. Everything seemed normal. The cultivators continued to fight, and yet, their hearts suddenly quivered. It was as if their souls were trembling due to the imminent arrival of some powerful, invisible force!

Nascent Soul cultivators. Devas. Even the demigods.... All of them were so shaken that they gasped!

It wasn't just in the Wildlands that such things happened. All living beings in the lands of Heavenspan, from cultivators to animals, even the vegetation and the mortals, all reacted similarly. Then, high in the sky appeared... the world net!!

At that point, all beings in the world heard a voice. Although it was only a murmur, the pressure weighing down on them was impossible to even describe!

“Master... I’m coming to save you!”

--

Er Gen released this picture of Bai Xiaochun and Bai Hao around when this chapter originally came out, so I thought it was good to save this one for here. It depicts the moment recalled in this very chapter. I'll add this to the AWE art page after this chapter gets released publicly.



Chapter 1010: Fiery Apocalypse

It was a voice filled with the deepest faith!

It was a voice filled with fearless madness!

It was a voice that revealed a deep reverence for a Master, the type that could not be erased even by the destruction of the body!

Heaven and earth rumbled as flames spread out across the sky of the Wildlands. Cultivators from both sides of the conflict looked up in utter shock, with many of them gasping aloud!

“The sky... is on fire?!?!”

“The heavens are aflame! How... how could this be happening?!?!”

“Look... there’s a person inside that fire!!”

The enormous figure which appeared inside of the flame slowly looked up, fixing his gaze on the distant Heavenspan Sea. As he did, his features became clear to the cultivators down below in the Wildlands.

Soon, the savages, soul cultivators, heavenly marquises and heavenly dukes began to cry out in astonishment.

“That’s... the Hell-Emperor!!”

“The Hell-Emperor!!”

As everyone in the Wildlands reeled in shock, Bai Hao began to speed toward the Heavenspan Sea with mountain-toppling, sea-draining energy radiating around him in the form of the sky-wide sea of fire!

The fire was spectacular to an indescribable degree, to the point where anyone who looked at it would assume that it could burn the entire world to a crisp.

As for the Heavenspan Sea, the incoming fire instantly whipped

it up into a frenzy, as though it wished to block its path. However, any such efforts were useless!

The fire closed in from the direction of the Wildlands, covering the entire sky above the Heavenspan Sea. The flames, which contained Bai Hao's will, then began to rush toward Heavenspan Island!

The sea didn't seem capable of standing up to the burning heat of the fire, and began to evaporate, releasing boundless energy of heaven and earth.

It was so unprecedentedly strong that it quickly spread out into the entire world, reaching even as far as the Wildlands....

Plants suddenly sprouted, and flowers bloomed. Animals roared, and all living things were deeply shaken!

However, they also felt instinctively uneasy. After all, these levels of spiritual energy were clearly not a natural occurrence. They were more like when a cultivator burned his or her own soul to gain dangerous levels of power!

The Heavenspan Sea was not without end, and as it evaporated and poured incredible spiritual energy out into the world, it did so in a way that couldn't be replenished!

And yet... Bai Hao didn't care about that. He had surpassed the limits of the world by creating twenty-two-colored flame, and had even placed his own soul on the road to sacrifice to do it.

And there was only one reason for all of that....

Bai Hao knew that he didn't have much time to work with!!

Just like the evaporation of the Heavenspan Sea, using his own soul to conjure twenty-two-colored flame was a path that could not be returned from. Now that his soul was aflame, it would only be a short period of time before it was burned into nothing. At that point, the twenty-two-colored flame would vanish!

Time was of the essence, and therefore, Bai Hao immediately made his move on Heavenspan Island!

If this moment were frozen in time and depicted artistically, the sky would not be visible, nor would the Heavenspan Sea. The only thing visible would be... an endless sea of fire, descending with ultimate madness onto Heavenspan Island!

As of this moment, Heavenspan Island did not exist within the Heavenspan Sea. Instead, it existed within heavenly flame! Its beaches melted, its lands were scorched black, and crevices ripped open everywhere!

A roar like that of a furious giant echoed out in all directions as the fire completely engulfed the entire island.

Many parts of the island began to explode, sending rock and rubble flying about, which was almost instantly transformed into ash!

It was as if Bai Hao's plan to save Bai Xiaochun was to simply burn Heavenspan Island completely away!

Rumbling sounds filled the world as the sea of fire became a huge mouth which consumed Heavenspan Island!

The plants on the island vanished.... Mountains turned bright red and then shattered, the resulting debris instantly becoming ash!

There was little need to mention the beautiful buildings which filled the island. They were burned away within moments. The valuable medicinal plants that had once grown in abundance were destroyed, as was the lake of Heavenspan Sea water, and the waterfall.

Thankfully, Bai Hao was by nature a kind person, and controlled the fire in a way that spared the special guards, who fled in complete astonishment.

“This... this....”

“Someone’s attacking Heavenspan Island...?”

There were two old men among the special guards who were actually demigods! They were none other than the famed Heavenspan Island divine guards! And yet even they were completely flabbergasted by this raging fire. They couldn’t even approach the flames, and were forced to watch from a distance as the flames engulfed the island, and rushed specifically toward... the huge statue of the Celestial, his Palace of the Dao!

The two mountains to either side turned bright red, and then exploded into ash. At the same time, the flames engulfed the statue of the Celestial.

Everyone watching could see it melt. Within a few breaths of time, the statue which had stood for so many years was reduced to a lump of slag, which then dissolved into ash....

The entire Palace of the Dao... was wiped out of existence!

The moment the Arch-Emperor Dynasty had been driven out of the lands of Heavenspan, this island had become a holy land.... But now, fire rained down from the heavens and wiped it out of existence....

On what was left of the island, many of the flames converged together, revealing... an enormous flame giant, radiating an aura that caused the entire world to tremble!

The giant wore imperial robes made of flame, and a fiery imperial crown. When he spoke, it was in a roar that caused everything in the area to shake violently.

“Master, I’m here to save you!”

The special guards were struck to the core, and their minds began to spin out of control.

And yet, the burning destruction wasn’t over yet!

As the giant roared, the rest of the sea of fire, having destroyed

everything on the surface of the island, began to pour into the crevices which had opened up in it!

Their destination was none other than the huge spell formation in the necropolis!

The spell formation was in full operation at the moment. The bones, and the remains of the three Arch-Emperors, had fully melted, and were now part of the spell formation.

Roughly half of the black liquid was gone, having turned into countless magical symbols that crawled over Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei.

As for the Celestial, he stood there, a vicious expression on his face as he kept his hands locked onto the heads of Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei.

“Fuse! Fuse!! Fuse, dammit!!!”

Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei were trembling nonstop, and seemed just on the verge... of fusing together....

And that was when the necropolis began to split apart. It was as if doomsday had arrived! The rock walls began to glow red, and then simply exploded, allowing torrents of fire to burst inside!

It was as if... the world were descending into a fiery apocalypse!

Chapter 1011: Raging Blood Qi

How could the Celestial not be aware of what was occurring outside of the necropolis? However, the critical moment in the fusion process had come, and he couldn't afford to be distracted. At the moment, he wouldn't care if the entire world and everyone in it died, much less Heavenspan Island. To him, only the task at hand was important!

“Fuse, dammit!” he shouted, sending some of his cultivation base power out to block the sea of fire, and using some of it to try to force Bai Xiaochun and Du Lingfei to fuse together.

“Master!!” Bai Hao cried from within the flames. The first thing he had seen upon entering the necropolis was his Master, unconscious and in the hands of the Celestial, who was trying to force him to fuse with Du Lingfei....

It was a scene that almost immediately drove Bai Hao into utter madness. Howling, he advanced toward Bai Xiaochun with increased speed from within the twenty-two-colored flame. As he did, the rock walls melted, and intense rumbling sounds echoed out.

The burning heat and shocking aura of the flame immediately caused the Celestial's expression to flicker.

Shockingly, the defensive measures he had thrown up with his cultivation base were absolutely powerless against these flames.

“What kind of fire is that?!?!” The Celestial's heart was already starting to pound because of this intense flame, the power of which surpassed anything he could ever have predicted.

In the blink of an eye, the fire was inside of the Celestial's defenses, past Du Lingfei... and right next to Bai Xiaochun!

Then... it let out a blast of power!!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Power which surpassed the limitations of the world created something like a wall of fire that shoved violently against the Celestial!

The Celestial's face was one of vicious fury, and his eyes blazed with cruelty and madness.

“Feeling suicidal, Bai Hao?!” he roared, unleashing the energy of a quasi-celestial. He hoped to destroy the fire, but it was too hot, and in fact, filled him with a sensation of imminent, deadly crisis!

“Just... just what kind of fire is this?!” Even the Celestial was forced to retreat in the face of the heat. Also pushed away was... Du Lingfei!

She had long since lost consciousness, so as soon as the force pushed against her, she was ripped away from Bai Xiaochun and thrown off into the distance!

Rumbling sounds echoed out continuously as the wall of flames continued to push the Celestial away. Although all of this takes a bit of time to describe, it actually happened in only a split second!

After Du Lingfei and the Celestial were pushed away, the flames once again formed into the shape of Bai Hao, who stood there... right in front of the unconscious Bai Xiaochun!

Because of the shock which came from the interruption of the fusion process, as well as the heat of the flames, Bai Xiaochun suddenly regained a bit of consciousness.

He forced his eyes open, and although they were listless and mostly blank, when he saw the fire and Bai Hao, he weakly murmured, “Hao'er....”

In response, Bai Hao shivered, and his eyes flickered with profound grief. As for Bai Xiaochun, it seemed that his life force was on the verge of being completely exterminated, and he slowly closed his eyes. At that point, the pain Bai Hao felt in his heart reached the ultimate pinnacle.

“I’ll take care of everything, Master!” he said through gritted teeth. By this point, he could sense that his soul was on the verge of vanishing, which meant that the twenty-two-colored flame would only last for a bit longer.

Right now, the most important thing to do was save his Master. And Bai Hao could sense that Bai Xiaochun’s injuries were unprecedentedly severe.... His life force was ninety-nine percent gone!

He only had a tiny scrap of energy left....

Any delay could lead to Bai Xiaochun being killed in body and soul! His body would cease to live, and his Dao would vanish forever!

It was the most critical of moments, and therefore, Bai Hao didn’t hesitate for even a moment. Howling, he retracted the wall of flames, which caused a sudden burst of teleportation power to appear.

He was using twenty-two-colored flame, something that surpassed the limitations of the world itself, to perform a teleportation, and whisk Bai Xiaochun away!

“How dare you, Bai Hao!!” To see all of his hopes about to be taken away caused the Celestial to descend into further rage and madness.

How could he possibly just sit there and watch as Bai Hao saved Bai Xiaochun?!

“Disperse, you trifling sea of fire!”

The Celestial was shocked by the power of the flame, but that didn’t stop the pressure of his will from exploding out. It caused the air to split and rip, and the sky overhead to shake. In fact, all of the lands of Heavenspan began to tremble.

At the moment, the Celestial possessed the power of an entire world, as well as its fury!

His energy skyrocketed, and in the blink of an eye, the seawater began to seethe, and the lands began to quake so hard that crevices opened up everywhere!

The Celestial's aura, his cultivation base, and all of the pressure roiling off of him reached a fever pitch as he lifted his right foot and then took a step forward!

As he did that, his aura, his cultivation base, and the pressure took physical form. An enormous Dharma Idol materialized, which then lunged toward the flames!

Radiant color shone off of the Dharma Idol, which seemed to encompass the power of wind, rain, thunder and lightning! Shockingly, this was the will of the world itself, which was now attempting to contest with the twenty-two-colored flame!

Energy levels like this could destroy the heavens and extinguish the earth!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

The fire which surpassed the limitations of the world suddenly trembled. Inside of it, Bai Hao was shaking visibly, as though an enormous invisible hand were closing around him to crush him out of existence!

Bai Hao wanted to keep his soul burning to power the flame, but the power of the Celestial was too incredible. With every step the Celestial took, the twenty-two-colored flame was forced backward, and also shrank down!

“Nobody can stop me from saving my Master! Not even you... Daoist Heavenspan!!” As the Celestial approached, Bai Hao howled and stretched his arms wide. He glanced back at Bai Xiaochun with a look of sorrow and departure, then decisively waved both hands through the air in front of him!!

“Burn! Burn my soul! Burn all of me!!” Laughing loudly, Bai Hao... ignited the forty percent of his soul that remained!!

He was going all out! He was holding absolutely nothing back!!

The twenty-two-colored flame which the Celestial had been battling against suddenly flared to life with madness. The Celestial's face fell.

“Nooooo!!” he screamed. But the twenty-two-colored flame was just as fear-inspiring as before, despite how he had suppressed it to a certain degree. And now that Bai Hao was burning his entire being, even the Celestial was forced to back away.

His eyes were completely bloodshot, and filled with madness as he watched the power of teleportation building up inside of the sea of fire. At that point, a howl of rage erupted from his lips that everyone in the world could hear.

“Four rivers form the heavenly bones!” All of a sudden, the Heavenspan Realm began to tremble, and ghost images of the four rivers and the lands that bordered them rose up into the sky, almost like enormous souls!

“A golden sea to act as flesh!” Blue veins bulged out on the Celestial's face and neck as he waved both hands through the air. Instantly, the waters of the Heavenspan Sea began to float up. In the blink of an eye, they connected with the souls of the four rivers. Shockingly, the souls of the four rivers were like bones, and the seawater was like flesh, creating an enormous, golden hand!

The hand emitted an aura that caused all living things in the Heavenspan Realm to tremble. This was... really and truly, the hand of the world!!

And it was now moving toward Heavenspan Island!

It blotted out the heavens as it moved with incredible speed toward the sea of fire on the island, which had still not teleported away!

Despair rose up in Bai Hao's heart, and he smiled bitterly. Although his burning soul was powerful enough to contend with

the hand of the world itself... he couldn't evade it. The teleportation would be interrupted, and his soul... would be gone. There would be no second chance for escape....

However, it was in that very moment that... from the direction of the eastern Heavenspan River, or more precisely, from the sect headquarters of the River-Defying Sect, a blood qi suddenly appeared...

That raged into the highest heavens!!

Chapter 1012: Blood Ancestor, Resurrected!

Along with the raging blood qi, a blood-red beam of light appeared in the air over Heavenspan Island. It came from the east, causing all the lands to tremble and quake as it pierced through the air!

Within that blood-colored light was... an enormous blood spear!

It was fully 30,000 meters long, and as it closed in, it became clear that its target was not the island itself. Instead, it was the enormous world hand formed from the souls of the four rivers and the Heavenspan Sea!

It moved with shocking speed, and when it slammed into the world hand, it unleashed a deafening boom.

“Blood Ancestor!” the Celestial howled, his face twisted with rage. “You’re not dead!?!?”

Unfortunately for him, his shout could do nothing to prevent the blood spear from hitting the world hand. The spear began to crumble into pieces upon impact, and yet, it caused the hand to falter slightly on its path toward Bai Hao and Bai Xiaochun!

That slight pause was enough!

Bai Hao, who had been in the middle of smiling bitterly, suddenly caused his soul to burn with even more intensity, instantly completing the buildup of teleportation power!

Bai Hao’s flame form wrapped Bai Xiaochun up and then vanished from Heavenspan Island!

The unconscious Bai Xiaochun struggled to open his eyes, but all he could see was vaguely flickering flames. And yet... he was still able to detect a raging blood qi that was very similar to his own!

Back on Heavenspan Island, the Celestial howled with rage and madness, causing the world to shake, and icy coldness to spread

out in all directions!

“Damn you, Blood Ancestor! You... you’re not dead!?!?” The Celestial was filled with so much rage it defied description. He had sacrificed his own flesh and blood, had paid the highest of prices, and yet, in the end... he yet again failed in the critical moment.

He failed every time, a fact that pushed him into pure insanity.

“Damn all of you! I hope you all die!! You won’t escape, Bai Xiaochun!!” As the Celestial howled, the world hand began to grow larger, and simultaneously speed in the direction of the Wildlands in pursuit of Bai Hao.

However, it was in that very moment that another surge of blood qi erupted from the sect headquarters of the River-Defying Sect! And this time, the levels of energy involved vastly surpassed the last eruption!

The entire world turned the color of blood, and the source was...

The eastern Heavenspan region!

The sect headquarters of the River-Defying Sect!

All of the disciples who were still in the sect were completely and utterly shaken. In fact, they began to flee, their expressions those of incredulity and shock. The focus of their gazes... was something towering up in the very middle of the River-Defying Sect, something that was viewed as a precious treasure of the sect itself... the fleshly body of the Blood Ancestor!

He was matchlessly tall, a giant who stood right next to the Dire Skybanyan, and had remained in place for countless years without moving of his own volition. For all intents and purposes, he was a corpse.

But right now, the Blood Ancestor was actually moving! Soil and dirt that had built up on his skin over the years began to crack and fall off in pieces, falling down to the earth far below.

His hand, once the home of the Blood Stream Sect, twitched, causing more dirt and soil to crumble down toward the ground.

Deep within the Blood Ancestor, his withered heart suddenly began to beat....

Thump thump! Thump thump!

The pounding of his heart echoed out as blood-colored light poured from it into his blood vessels. Streams of fresh blood then began to flow out into his body!

His blood vessels were... regenerating!

The process happened extremely quickly, with maddening speed. Soon, the beating of his heart became so loud that it was audible outside of his body!

The cultivators in the River-Defying Sect all gasped, and began to cry out in alarm.

“The Blood Ancestor... the Blood Ancestor... he....”

“Heavens, what’s going on here?!?!”

“He’s... he’s alive?!”

The Blood Stream Division was especially shocked. After all, this was their reserve precious treasure, something that had aided all of them in their cultivation over the years. They had imitated the Blood Ancestor, and used him to create all sorts of divine abilities. And now... he was coming back to life!!

In the past, the Blood Ancestor could move when the disciples of the Blood Stream Division pooled their power to control him. But now... no one was controlling him. Therefore, the sound of his heart beating cause waves of shock to rise up within all of the disciples who were present to observe.

Soon, the sound was as loud as thunder from the heavens. Even more shocking was the heaven-shaking, earth-shattering life force which began to burn inside of him!

Because of it, and because of the raging blood qi, all heaven and earth became stained as if with blood! The Blood Ancestor was coming back to life!

No longer did he radiate an aura of death. Instead, he thrummed with astonishing fleshly body power!

However... it was only a resurrection of his fleshly body. The Blood Ancestor was coming to life physically, but... he had no soul!

And yet... as the Blood Ancestor's fleshly body awoke, and his life force flourished, a monkey appeared on a mountain in the Spirit Stream Sect. This monkey had first appeared years ago when Bai Xiaochun concocted medicinal pills in the Spirit Stream Sect!

An unprecedentedly serious expression could be seen on his face right now, as well as a look of determination.

“It’s time for me to pay back what is owed.... I should be dead, so it's been a true blessing to be able to come back for these short years.... The gravekeeper wants me to restore your soul? That’s a fair trade!” The monkey laughed as his body withered up and then transformed into ash, revealing a soul!

It was not the monkey’s soul, but rather, the discarnate soul of some unknown entity. And it immediately began to fly toward the Blood Ancestor!

In another location in the River-Defying Sect was a rabbit. A wistful smile could be seen on his face as he closed his eyes and collapsed into ash, revealing another soul that also began to fly toward the Blood Ancestor!

It wasn’t just the monkey and the rabbit that did this. In another location in the lands of Heavenspan was a winged tiger, crouching in a mountainous valley. A tremor ran through it, after which it threw its head back and howled. As it did, it collapsed into ash, and a discarnate soul flew out!

The same thing happened with a certain flock of birds, a colony

of ants, and a group of geese.... All of the bizarre entities that had come into existence thanks to Bai Xiaochun's pill concocting efforts all transformed into ash....

As they did, the souls they had been carrying in their bodies flew up into the air and headed toward the River-Defying Sect!

Countless discarnate souls flew into the River-Defying Sect, and then entered the body of the Blood Ancestor. When the final one arrived, the Blood Ancestor shivered.

Then, a growling sound echoed out from his throat to fill the entire world!

"I held my breath yesterday, to awaken today.... Finally, I'm back!" In that moment, the Blood Ancestor... opened his eyes!

A shocking murderous aura erupted out like a tempest, a murderous aura filled... with tempestuous hatred!

"I've come back for you... Celestial!!!" All of the soil and dirt which had once existed on the Blood Ancestor was gone, revealing a god of battle who leaped into the air and began to fly in the direction of Heavenspan Island, seething with hatred and madness!

It was in that moment that, in the imperial palace of Arch-Emperor City, the Arch-Emperor stood looking in the direction of Spirit Advent City, which had fallen, and was burning to the ground. In fact, streams of soul cultivators were fleeing from there toward Arch-Emperor City.

All of a sudden, a tremor passed through the Arch-Emperor, as he sensed a type of blood qi which existed in legends.

"That's... that's...." The Arch-Emperor was so shocked he almost couldn't speak.

Far below, in the third level of Arch-Emperor City, within the ruined, crumbling pagoda, the gravekeeper sat there cross-legged in meditation. Yet again, his eyes slowly opened to look at Bai

Xiaochun and Bai Hao, who were materializing in front of him, wreathed in flames.

“The final phase of the plan... can now begin....”

Chapter 1013: Three Kowtows Of Gratitude

Everyone in the River-Defying Sect was completely stunned as the Blood Ancestor launched into the air, radiating an astonishing blood qi that caused all creation to turn the color of blood.

Within his eyes burned madness and vengeance that originated from countless years in the past. He was a bright beam of light that cut through the air and headed directly toward... Heavenspan Island!!

Mountains crumbled because of his passage, and the Heavenspan Sea parted as surely as if it had been cut with a gigantic blade. A huge line appeared, stretching directly from the eastern river all the way to Heavenspan Island!

It was so deep that the seafloor was visible at the bottom, with two cliffs of water on either side!

Even the powerful Celestial was shocked, and instantly ceased any attempt to chase after Bai Hao and Bai Xiaochun!

However, there was something different to this blood qi compared to Bai Xiaochun's. Although the Blood Ancestor had reached the great circle of the Undying Codex, he currently had no cultivation base to back it up. And yet, because of his bloodline, his fleshly body power was even more shocking.... He was a descendant of the original Arch-Emperor, and therefore, the power he could draw upon from the Undying Codex actually surpassed Bai Xiaochun's!

After all, the Undying Codex had originally been designed for use by the Arch-Emperor's descendants!

Furthermore, the Blood Ancestor had been famous for many years. He had built up much more blood qi throughout his extended cultivation of the Undying Codex. And back when he had died, although it seemed like his blood qi vanished, it had actually

remained hidden, deep within him. Bai Xiaochun, who had just made his breakthrough, couldn't possibly compare to that.

Now, all of that power erupted out into the open, and it was far greater than the power of an ordinary demigod. It was very close to the great circle, and created an aura that even Daoist Heavenspan was surprised by!

If that were all there were to it, it might not have been a big deal. However, when the Blood Ancestor awoke, he could sense Bai Xiaochun's existence, and could tell that he was not a descendant of the Arch-Emperor. Because of that, he immediately had an idea of what the gravekeeper was planning to do. It was a different plan than the gravekeeper had explained to him on the eve of his own death. But the Blood Ancestor didn't care about that.

"If the gravekeeper picked him... then that's fine.... I brought shame to the original ancestor. I don't deserve to lead the people of this world out into the heavens.... I don't deserve to fulfil the founder's wishes... I just wanted to live an ordinary life with Ling'er....

"The Celestial murdered Ling'er right in front of me. But now I'm awake.... I won't stay alive for long... but I must see the Celestial dead!!" The Blood Ancestor was laughing and crying at the same time, his eyes shining with madness!

"Maybe I can't kill him myself... but I can prevent him from ruining the gravekeeper's plan. I can stop him... from gaining control of the world treasure that Ling'er is fusing with!" Rumbling sounds echoed out as the Blood Ancestor burst into flames. Shockingly... he was burning every aspect of himself to further increase his battle prowess!

"My only regret... is that I can tell that Ling'er's soulclone is asleep inside the world treasure of the north...." After casting a glance in that direction, the Blood Ancestor pushed forward with greater speed.

He was a burning giant that pulsed with battle prowess that surpassed the great circle of the Demigod Realm. He was very close to being... a quasi-celestial!

Within mere moments, he caught sight of Heavenspan Island, as well as an enormous hand whose bones were made of the souls of the rivers, and whose flesh was seawater. In front of that hand was none other than... the Celestial!

“Celestial!!” the Blood Ancestor howled, accelerating.

The Celestial’s eyes narrowed, but they still pulsed with a murderous aura. The frustration and hatred he felt for the gravekeeper in this moment defied description. Although the gravekeeper’s cultivation base had declined in recent years, the man had not lost any of his ability to scheme. In fact, every twist and turn in which the gravekeeper came out on top caused the Celestial to sink to further depths of failure.

To be deprived of hope over and over again had pushed the Celestial into a state of insanity. Growling, he waved his arm, causing the enormous world hand to shoot toward the Blood Ancestor!

10,000 years ago... these two had fought a battle to the death. And now, 10,000 years later... the same spirit of battle could be seen!

This would be a shocking fight the likes of which the world rarely saw!

As it began, the gravekeeper was in the depths of the precious treasure that was Arch-Emperor City. He had been looking out in the direction of the Heavenspan Sea, but now he retracted his gaze... and looked at Bai Hao and Bai Xiaochun.

There had been nowhere else in the world for Bai Hao to flee to. This was the only place where he felt he could escape the deadly pursuit of the Celestial!

Although the gravekeeper was hovering on the brink of death... he was still the previous Hell-Emperor. And despite his age... he was still the gravekeeper of this entire world!

After the teleportation finished successfully, Bai Hao breathed a sigh of relief. The twenty-two-colored flame being fueled by the burning of his soul was now starting to fade away.

Bai Hao knew that his remaining time... was very, very limited....

He didn't want to leave, but had no choice. He looked at his Master, sitting there cross-legged, his life force as weak as could be, his skin like wrinkled parchment and his hair fallen out, and Bai Hao wept.

“Master....” he murmured. As a soul body, he would normally not be able to truly shed tears. But now, in this final moment of his life, a miracle occurred, and tears began to roll down his face.

As they fell, they turned into fire. And yet, the stabbing pain in Bai Hao's heart ensured that they only continued to flow.

Eventually, Bai Xiaochun apparently heard his apprentice. Groggy and weak, he barely managed to crack open his eyes. The mere effort caused a fresh wave of exhaustion to sweep through him.

Although he could barely open his eyes, he was still able to see his apprentice standing there in front of him.... Bai Xiaochun was mostly in a daze, almost soulless, and yet, his gaze locked directly onto Bai Hao.

“Master!!” Bai Hao said excitedly, kneeling down in front of Bai Xiaochun. As he did, his soul began to fade away, and yet, a happy smile could be seen on his face.

It was the pure smile of a young one looking at the most important person in his life. It was a smile of respect that originated from deep within his body and soul. And as he smiled, he placed his hands onto the ground and kowtowed.

One kowtow!

“Thank you, Master... for saving my soul....” Even as he murmured the words, his head touched the ground, and he thought back to the moment he had regained consciousness, and seen Bai Xiaochun standing there. I'm your Master, he had said.

It was an eternal memory for Bai Hao.

Bai Xiaochun shivered, sensing that something unusual was happening. He struggled against his confused state, wishing he could think clearly, and wishing he could open his eyes further.

Bai Hao straightened from his kowtow and looked deeply at Bai Xiaochun. His smile was radiant, but at the same time, contained the sorrow of departure. With that, he kowtowed again.

Two kowtows!

“Thank you, master... for keeping me company....” Bai Hao's voice was weak now, and his soul had almost completely faded away. The twenty-two-colored flame was now almost completely gone.

In his mind, he saw the spirit enhancement shop back in Arch-Emperor City. He thought about all the things that he and Bai Xiaochun had done there, memories which would never leave him.

It had been the first time in his life that he had truly experienced familial love. The warmth he had felt then was something that would always be part of him....

Bai Xiaochun shivered. It was as if, deep within him, his consciousness was struggling to free itself. A deep feeling of unease had overtaken him, the type that came when someone realized that something supremely precious was about to disappear. Despite his weakness and the befuddlement that gripped him, Bai Xiaochun was starting to regain his senses!

Bai Hao looked up at Bai Xiaochun for the final time. His gaze was deep, as if he hoped to burn this image into his mind for all

eternity. He didn't want to leave, but now, his time was up. As his soul began to fade away for good, he kowtowed for the last time....

Three kowtows!

"Thank you, Master...." he murmured. He wasn't able to finish speaking the sentence. In the middle of his kowtow, he faded away. It started with his feet... and spread to his legs... and then his torso. Finally, his head disappeared from view....

Three kowtows of gratitude!

The rest of his sentence would only ever exist within his mind.

If I get another life after this one, Master... I hope I can be your apprentice again....

In the moment that Bai Hao faded away, Bai Xiaochun suddenly reached out with his withered hand....

Chapter 1014: Just A Bit

His hand... grasped at nothing but air....

“Hao’er!!” Bai Xiaochun’s consciousness began to rise up from within the blankness, pushed by an indescribable wave of grief!

His eyes snapped open to see... nothing. The twenty-two-colored flame was gone, and Bai Hao along with it.

Only a tiny wisp of the fire remained, a spark, the last trace of Bai Hao that remained in the world. As it fell onto the back of Bai Xiaochun’s hand, it burned him, leaving a small mark.

Bai Xiaochun shivered, his hand frozen in midair in front of him, his eyes filled with tears.

Although he had not been able to see Bai Hao’s final moments clearly, he could sense that his apprentice was now no more....

Tears fell down onto his withered skin, and the ground beneath his feet, as more grief than he ever imagined could exist overwhelmed him.

It wasn't that Bai Xiaochun had never experienced the death of a friend or loved one. But this was different. Bai Hao’s passing filled his mind with a deep, deathly stillness....

It was a grief the likes of which led, not to screaming and yelling, but to silence and the shedding of tears....

He thought back to the first time he had ever seen Bai Hao. He thought back to the moment when his soul awakened. He thought back to how they had relied on each other to survive in the Wildlands....

From now on, Bai Hao, I'm your Master!

Hao’er, how do you think Master did this time around!?

Hahaha!! Don’t worry, your Master has a lot of experience with this kind of thing.

As the memories flitted through his head, he shivered uncontrollably. He still couldn't pull his hand back, and in fact, made another attempt to grab hold of Bai Hao. He refused to believe that his apprentice had truly perished....

"Hao'er...." he murmured, tears streaming down his face. Then he began to weep, the sound of which echoed out with the most profound grief and pain possible....

"Why? Why are people always fighting and killing each other...? Why do people have to die...? Why...? Immortal cultivation is about living forever, isn't it...? Why...?"

As he wallowed in his tears and grief, he couldn't help but ask the same questions he had wondered about from the moment he started down the path of cultivation. Time passed, and his voice grew weaker and weaker.

He only had the tiniest scrap of life force left in him. Bai Hao's departure had inundated him with grief, a grief that was not the type that could be expunged with mere tears.

And thus, the grief built upon itself, becoming a cold wind that extinguished the last spark of warmth left inside of him. It became a tempest that sealed away anything and everything....

In the moment before the tempest sealed away his life itself, Bai Xiaochun looked up at the gravekeeper, and within his gaze... was profound grief and... hatred!

By now, he understood that, whether it was Du Lingfei or Bai Hao, the person responsible for how everything had turned out... was the gravekeeper....

He didn't know why the gravekeeper had done all these things, but it didn't matter. There was no way he could forgive him!!

The hatred within Bai Xiaochun's eyes was something that had never before appeared, or even existed within him!

He was a happy-go-lucky person, with a simple heart. And yet, all

of that was now overwhelmed by the hatred, locked away and sealed within his memories.

He chuckled, and then closed his eyes.

The gravekeeper saw the hatred, and could sense the life force in Bai Xiaochun withering like an unbloomed flower because of the grief.... The gravekeeper sat there in the crumbling pagoda, and he sighed.

Had it been possible, he would never have let Bai Hao perish. But not even he could save Bai Hao's soul after it became the fuel for a twenty-two-colored flame. He might have been able to secretly feed a bit of life force into him in the end... but even he wasn't sure if that would have done anything.

"Bai Xiaochun...." he murmured, his ancient voice echoing out into the ruins of the third portion of the city, which was spread out around him.

"Please know that, although I came up with this plan... I didn't orchestrate every single detail....

"The reason why all of this is happening is... the Undying Live Forever Technique....

"The undying aspect corresponds to Yang, and the live forever aspect corresponds to Yin...." Although his voice entered Bai Xiaochun's ears, it could not reach his grief-stricken consciousness.

It almost was as if the gravekeeper wasn't directing his words at Bai Xiaochun... but rather, himself. It was as if he was attempting to bolster his own convictions and faith.

"These two codices of Arch-Emperor's magic were passed down for many years. They are partly that which is eternal, and partly that which is tribulation. Perhaps both, perhaps neither. They represent... hope...." The gravekeeper seemed more ancient than ever in this moment..

“Sadly, one codex alone is difficult to master. It would be rare to find someone who could succeed even among those with a strong bloodline tracing back to the Arch-Emperor, much less those in the world today, in which the bloodline is weak.... And even if someone succeeded... they would be unable to combine the Yin and the Yang, and achieve the next breakthrough. After mastering one codex, there could be no more progress.

“To cultivate the Live Forever Codex after the Undying Codex would be difficult beyond imagination.... From ancient times until now, no one has ever done it.... After all, the only way to practice such cultivation... would be to die first!

“The reason for that is... the opposite of that which is undying, is that which dies. And the opposite of that which lives forever is that which lives for a short time. Both of those equate to death....

“The connection between that which is undying and that which lives forever... is death! However, that death is not a true perishing. For example, the Blood Ancestor. He held his breath in the past to awaken today!” Normally speaking, the gravekeeper would not give voice to words such as these. But there was little need for propriety now. Bai Hao was dead, and thus, the Hell-Emperor was dead. Because of that, the gravekeeper knew... that the end of the world was at hand.

From this moment on, there would be no cycle of reincarnation. Dead souls would roam the lands now that the Underworld River had dried up, and Bai Hao had passed away....

As for any souls which had remained in the river, they would be unleashed on the world....

“Only by experiencing death can someone who has mastered the Undying Codex build the bridge.... Only then can that person qualify to cultivate the Live Forever Codex. However, to truly master that codex... requires time. Too much time....” The gravekeeper sighed.

Time was not something he had in abundance. Nor did he have any way to predict what other unforeseen circumstances could arise that would destroy his hopes and plans.

Before Bai Xiaochun, there had been the Blood Ancestor. The gravekeeper and the Blood Ancestor had only been able to discuss this plan, not carry it out.... But now that Bai Xiaochun was here, and had mastered the Undying Codex, things were different.

He had given up on the Blood Ancestor, and focused all his hope on Bai Xiaochun!

Because of that, and because of other important factors, the gravekeeper had adjusted his plan, and was now more confident than ever.

“Ah, Daoist Heavenspan.... If you ignore his evil, he is truly spectacular.... I would never have thought of his plan to concoct an Undying Live Forever Pill....” The gravekeeper closed his eyes.

He wanted Bai Xiaochun to take the Blood Ancestor’s place, to become the new hope. He would have Bai Xiaochun cultivate... the Live Forever Codex!

It would not be done in the usual fashion, but... it would work!!

Even the gravekeeper marveled at Daoist Heavenspan’s plan to create an Undying Live Forever Pill. It was a technique he had learned from, and modified! He had made a new plan, to plant the scrap of an aura from the Live Forever Codex into Bai Xiaochun!

That aura would be a seed that the gravekeeper could use other methods to catalyze, and push to completion faster than ordinary!

The gravekeeper opened his eyes and looked at Bai Xiaochun.

“In the end...” he murmured, “it was Daoist Heavenspan’s desire to leave this world, and the way I foiled his efforts, that forced him to resort to his final backup plan....

“In his madness, he went so far as to sacrifice his own child....

And I... will take this opportunity to make use of the Celestial and Du Lingfei.... I will plant just a bit of the aura of the Live Forever Codex into Bai Xiaochun....”

Chapter 1015: Eternal Turtle

“Your fusion already reached a certain critical point.... It doesn’t matter that your body has run out of life force, you still have a bit of the aura of the Live Forever Codex in you!” Although the gravekeeper’s eyes were cloudy, they still glittered with bright light as he looked into Bai Xiaochun. There, inside of Bai Xiaochun’s withered flesh and blood was... a scrap of the aura of the Live Forever Codex.

“That... is the seed! I will make that seed sprout, and turn it into the most towering of trees!” With that, the gravekeeper slowly rose to his feet. As he did, the cloudiness in his eyes vanished, and all of a sudden, he pulsed with a heaven-shaking, earth-shattering energy!

“Everything I do is for this world and the people who live in it. And also, for my true self... the first generation Arch-Emperor!

“Even more so, I do it for that which is eternal.... The only person I am letting down is you, Bai Xiaochun.... Therefore, allow me to bestow upon you the most beneficial of good fortunes, the type that can allow you to span the heavens!

“Once you leave this world, you’ll come to understand everything!”

The gravekeeper began to laugh, a laughter filled with both anticipation and shocking focus!

As his aura grew stronger, an unimaginably powerful life force erupted out of him, apparently a burst of energy like the final radiance from a setting sun. It was so intense that it seemed likely he would burst into flames at any moment.

As the gravekeeper’s aura skyrocketed, a massive wind kicked up in the ruins of the third level of the city. Buildings and structures began to crumble away into nothing.

Eventually, the third level of the city was in such a state of ruin that it seemed likely that it would collapse. At the same time, though, the entire precious treasure that was Arch-Emperor City began to tremble.

“I'm not strong enough anymore. And although I can't completely control this precious treasure left behind by my true self, I can definitely extract the magical power stored inside of it!” With that, he waved his finger at Bai Xiaochun, who seemed completely bereft of any life.

Just as the final tiniest drop of Bai Xiaochun's life force seemed about to wink out, the gravekeeper waved his finger, and Arch-Emperor City vibrated. At the same time, Bai Xiaochun suddenly spasmed bodily.

His heart had already gone still in death, but now, it twitched. And then, his bag of holding opened of its own volition, and the two skeletons he had acquired on Ghostmother's battleship flew out into the open!

As the gold and crystal skeletons shone with scintillating light, the gravekeeper spoke in a voice that echoed like heavenly thunder,.

“Eternal Turtle regnant! You are the companion spirit of the Eternal Mother! Get out here immediately!”

The little turtle immediately flew out of Bai Xiaochun's bag of holding, although whether or not it did so willingly was impossible to tell.

“Dammit, you old fogey. I knew something fishy was going on. That's why I've been hiding recently. Who would have thought... that you would actually recognize me!?” The little turtle looked over at Bai Xiaochun, and an expression of guilt could be seen in his eyes.

Ignoring the little turtle's words, the gravekeeper reached out

with his right hand. In response, the little turtle shrieked and tried to dodge out of the way.

“Your fate is on the line here too, Eternal Turtle,” the gravekeeper said. “If you weren’t asleep just now, then why the hell didn’t you show your face?!”

The little turtle seemed to be struggling about what to do, but a moment later, he sighed, as though resigning himself to his fate.

“Fine. Fine!” he shouted. “What do you want from me!?”

“Your blood!” the Gravekeeper replied, his eyes flashing with sharp light. The little turtle clenched his jaw, stuck his head as far as he could out of his shell, then twisted around and bit down hard on his own neck.

He bit down so hard that his head flew off to the side, and a geyser of blood erupted out from the gaping wound. His body immediately began to turn dark, until his head flew back and attached to his neck again. Within moments, there wasn’t even a trace of any sort of wound.

“There you go, you old bastard!” he said weakly. Then, he turned into a white beam of light, ignoring the gravekeeper as he shot back into Bai Xiaochun’s bag of holding. A moment later, his head popped back out. “You know what, you old bastard? Based on what I know of Bai Xiaochun, it’s not a common thing for him to hate somebody. But once he does, he hates them for all eternity....”

The gravekeeper looked coldly at the little turtle, then waved his right hand, causing the blood that had just spilled out to converge into a blood sphere. Next, he sent the blood sphere toward the two skeletons. As it merged into them, the golden and crystalline light shining out grew more intense.

At the same time, the auras of both the Undying Codex and the Live Forever Codex flared to life!

These two skeletons had a very extraordinary background. Back

when Ghostmother originally came to the Heavenspan Realm, she ended up trapped in the Deadmire, and thus, made a deal with the gravekeeper.

The terms of that deal stipulated that, one day, the gravekeeper would help Ghostmother leave this world!

In return, Ghostmother agreed to keep these two skeletons on deck 2 of her ghost galleon. There, they could absorb the spiritual energy present in the ship, spiritual energy which came from beyond the heavens.

Because of that specific spiritual energy, the two skeletons grew much stronger than they had been originally. In some ways, they became refined! Another part of the deal between the gravekeeper and Ghostmother was that she would occasionally use her Celestial Realm cultivation base to personally advance the fusion of the two skeletons!

Many years passed during which, although no physical change could be detected, those two skeletons actually did merge together and became... a consummate high-level medicine!!

The reason for the gravekeeper's complicated plan was that he had gained an inkling of what the Celestial would attempt to do. And the gravekeeper's ability to understand matters relating to an Undying Live Forever Pill surpassed the Celestial's.

Furthermore, he had selected two very specific skeletons to be used in this plan of his. Somehow, he had acquired the skeletons of two Arch-Emperors, and kept the matter hidden from the Celestial!

Unfortunately, the skeleton with the Live Forever Bones was lacking in the requisite energy, which was why he had asked for assistance from Ghostmother.

Now, as the gravekeeper watched the little turtle's blood fuse with the skeletons, he performed a double-handed incantation

gesture. Eyes shining brightly, he thrust his hands out and pushed them down onto the skeletons.

“Merge!!” he shouted. The little turtle’s blood ignited, fully fusing the two skeletons on an internal level. Impurities were expelled, and then, the skeletons began to transform into ash....

The only thing left behind was the raw life force power of the Undying Live Forever Technique!

It was visible in the form of golden and crystalline streams of smoke, which curled and twisted together. It almost looked like what happened when a pill was concocted! As the smoke intertwined, and the blood vanished... a medicinal pill appeared that existed halfway between illusory and corporeal!

It looked both golden and crystalline at the same time, and its aura was that of the undying, and that which can live forever!

This pill... was the very pill that the Celestial thirsted for. An Undying Live Forever Pill!

The Celestial had failed in his attempts to make it, but the gravekeeper, thanks to his astounding plotting and preparations, succeeded!

When the gravekeeper saw the pill form, he chuckled hoarsely. From the look in his ancient eyes, he was preparing to say goodbye to the world around him. Waving his hand, he sent the medicinal pill flying toward Bai Xiaochun!

Bai Xiaochun had no control over the matter whatsoever. The pill hit his forehead and merged into his body, causing massive rumbling sounds to explode out into his mind!

A tremor passed through him as life force similar to his own Undying Live Forever Technique began to course through him!

He had been as immobile as if he had been sealed moments ago. But now that freezing seal shattered, and his eyes snapped open. Gasping, he looked over at the gravekeeper.

“Why?!” he asked.

“You can hate me, Bai Xiaochun,” the gravekeeper replied. “But once you leave this world, you will understand everything.... To me, there is nothing more important than my mission!” With that, the gravekeeper reached out and placed his hand onto the top of Bai Xiaochun’s head.

His cultivation base erupted with power, and all of the remaining life force he had, all of his remaining latent energy, left his body! All of Arch-Emperor City trembled violently as everything that made up the gravekeeper... poured into Bai Xiaochun!

Not only was the gravekeeper giving up his life to heal Bai Xiaochun, he was also catalyzing the Live Forever seed that existed within him!

Chapter 1016: There Was Never A Worldgate!

Rumbling sounds filled Bai Xiaochun's mind and spread through his entire body. His expression flickered as he realized that boundless life force was flowing through him.

This life force conformed with his Undying Live Forever Technique, and therefore, met no obstacle within him. It almost seemed like it belonged with his cultivation base, and as a result, it only took a brief moment for his withered and nearly destroyed body to be almost completely healed.

During the process, his fleshly body power skyrocketed. In the blink of an eye, he went from Qi Condensation to Foundation Establishment, and then Core Formation!!

As it happened, his Undying Skin, Undying Heavenly King, and Undying Tendons... all recovered completely. Furthermore, Bai Xiaochun could sense that this version of the Undying Codex was somehow different than what he had cultivated before!

It was... stronger! The life force was more vibrant, and its energy was the type that could shake heaven and earth!

Were it not for his previous experiences, it would have been difficult to detect. But considering how many years he had cultivated the Undying Codex, the sensation of fusing with this new energy left him completely shocked!

If his previous mastery of the Undying Skin had led to him to a level of one hundred percent of his possible battle prowess, then after recovering now, it had increased... to one hundred and fifty percent!!

It was a terrifying upgrade which would make him vastly more powerful than anyone in the same cultivation level as himself. It could only be described as heaven-defying!

And it all came from the two skeletons which had turned into ash, and then become a consummate Undying Live Forever Pill!

Apparently... this amazing pill was not just helping him recover his fleshly body and life force. It was also refining him in an incredible way. Now, his fleshly body power didn't just match someone who had the pure blood of the Arch-Emperors, it surpassed it!

Cracking sounds echoed out as his Undying Tendons solidified, and he rose rapidly through the levels of the Undying Bones. Within mere moments... he had reached the great circle!

He looked almost completely recovered. His hair was now back, long and full, and instead of being skinny and emaciated, he thrummed with vitality.

The cracks on his skin were gone, and furthermore, he glowed with golden light. Anyone who could see him in this moment would definitely be shaken by the holy air that he exuded.

At this point, he passed from the Undying Bones into the Undying Blood level!

More cracking sounds echoed out as his blood once again transformed into Undying Blood. That in turn aided in his regeneration, making it speed up even more.

The entire third level of the city around him was stained the color of blood, mixed within which was a tinge of gold!

After about ten breaths of time passed, his veins were completely filled with Undying Blood, and a tremor passed through him. As of this moment, the sensation of fleshly body power that existed within him surpassed anything from before!

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!!

Early Demigod realm. Mid realm. Late realm.... Great circle!!

As the cracking sounds continued, his battle prowess rose higher

and higher, to degrees difficult to even imagine.

Bai Xiaochun couldn't be absolutely sure, but he was fairly certain that, despite the fact that he currently had no cultivation base, his fleshly body power... was far, far higher than it had been before!

The last time he had reached the great circle of the Undying Codex, he had only become a demigod in fleshly body, and only the early realm at that. But now.... things were completely different! It came very close to being the same as the difference between heaven and earth!

Although he could feel the pressure of the world weighing down on him, it wasn't very shocking at all. Furthermore, he felt like, if he wanted to, he could will himself to grow to incredible physical height!

He could become as large... as the original Blood Ancestor!

This was the true Undying Codex!

This was what the descendants of the original Arch-Emperor had cultivated, a technique which gave them the power to prop up heaven and earth!

Bai Xiaochun was even fairly certain... that he was now stronger than the Blood Ancestor himself!! Normally speaking, these developments would have elated him. However, at this moment, his heart was as cold as ice. The death of Bai Hao had filled him with pain that couldn't possibly be wiped away.

"Things aren't over yet!" the gravekeeper said softly. "After the Undying Codex is... the Live Forever Codex!"

Even as the words left his mouth, Bai Xiaochun spasmed. Although the medicinal pill had been eighty percent absorbed, there was still twenty percent left, which contained energy that did not belong to the Undying Codex. And now... that power erupted!

It was the energy of the Live Forever Codex!

As that power spread through him, Bai Xiaochun realized that it was familiar. A twinge of pain stabbed through him, the source being that scrap of power from the Live Forever Codex!

“Boo....” he murmured. The life force from the Live Forever Codex poured into the scrap of energy inside of him, which then began to grow.

Within only a few breaths of time, the Live Forever power caused his energy passageways to thrum, and his cultivation base to rise to the Foundation Establishment level!

This type of Foundation Establishment surpassed his previous Heaven-Dao Foundation Establishment. This was... Live Forever Foundation Establishment!

The moment he reached the level of Live Forever Foundation Establishment, he sensed... the five seals of the human body!

A boom echoed out, and the first seal was destroyed!

At that point, the remaining twenty percent of the power of the medicinal pill continued to flow through him, propelling him toward a Live Forever Core!

“Listen well, Bai Xiaochun!” the gravekeeper said as he passed his cultivation base, life force and everything about himself into Bai Xiaochun. Thanks to the power of the magical item that was Arch-Emperor City, he was able to continue to push Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation base higher, even beyond what the energy of the medicinal pill could do.

Then, his voice echoed with focus and determination as he spoke his last words.

“I know you have many questions. And I know you hate me. Furthermore, you are surely curious... why I didn’t just comply with the Celestial, and let him leave this world!

“The reason is that... this world... actually has no Worldgate!

“The so-called Worldgate... is nothing more than a fabrication I invented specifically for the Celestial!!!” His words echoed out like peals of heavenly thunder into Bai Xiaochun’s mind.

“WHAT?!?!” Despite the fact that his cultivation base was rising rapidly, his mind was in complete chaos.

“If there was a Worldgate,” the gravekeeper continued, “I would have opened it long ago, and let the Celestial leave. There would have been no need for this complicated plan of mine!

“The whole reason for all of this is because there is no Worldgate!

“It is entirely possible for the living beings in this world to leave it. In fact... there are actually two ways!

“The first would be for someone with the blood of the Arch-Emperors to cultivate the Undying Live Forever Technique all the way to the Mahayana Realm, and become a celestial. The world net which binds this world would not be able to resist a true celestial, and would collapse!

“However, what would also collapse in that scenario... would be the entire world in which we live! All of the mountains and rivers, all of heaven and earth!

“At that time, the celestial-level Arch-Emperor would gather up all of the living beings from the destroyed world, all of his people... and bring them with him as he left!

“In the wider world outside, the Arch-Emperor Dynasty would then continue to prosper!” The gravekeeper spoke quickly, ensuring that his words battered at Bai Xiaochun’s mind without stop.

Furthermore, they were finally revealing... a profound and tightly-kept secret!!

It was in this moment that Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation base broke

through from the Live Forever Foundation Establishment level. At that point, something new appeared within him. It was... a Live Forever Core!

As his Live Forever Core took shape, the second of the seals appeared, and was destroyed!

It was also in that moment that the power of the medicinal pill began to falter. Clearly, it could not push him to the level of a Live Forever Nascent Soul!

Therefore, it was now the gravekeeper's cultivation base that erupted with power and continued to bolster the power within him that could live forever!

Chapter 1017: I Still Hate You!

The Undying Codex surpassed all other body refinement techniques in this heaven and earth. Similarly, the Live Forever Codex... surpassed all other divine abilities and cultivation practices!

Even someone as confident as the Celestial would have no choice but to stay silent in the face of the Live Forever Codex....

From the Frigid Matriarch and Du Lingfei, it was possible to see how shocking the Live Forever Codex was. Of course, Bai Xiaochun had never fought Du Lingfei, but he was now very familiar with her energy and power.

Now, as the energy of the Live Forever Codex flowed through him, he couldn't help but gasp. For one thing, the gravekeeper's words were shocking to the core. In addition to that, though, with the power of the Live Forever Codex inside of him, the spiritual energy of heaven and earth that existed in this world suddenly seemed weaker!

In fact, Bai Xiaochun also got the sensation that, with this power, he was like the monarch of all the peoples of this world!

All he had to do was exercise a single thought, and all entities in the world would lend him their cultivation base power!

Although it wouldn't increase his own cultivation base, it would allow him to crush almost any opponent!

Clearly... neither Du Lingfei nor the Frigid Matriarch had ever cultivated the Live Forever Codex to the point of manifesting a divine ability like this. This... was something that came only if someone mastered the Undying Codex first!

As the gravekeeper had said... before Bai Xiaochun, the only people to have ever cultivated this technique were the Arch-Emperors!

As Bai Xiaochun reeled in mute shock, the gravekeeper continued, his voice weak and hoarse. “There is a second way to leave....”

“And that is with... the battle prowess of a celestial! One wouldn't need to be a true celestial, but would need power of that level. Someone that powerful could simply destroy the world... and thus leave it!”

Bai Xiaochun only continued to feel more shaken with every moment that passed, to the point where he almost didn't notice that he had reached the Live Forever Nascent Soul stage.

The third seal appeared, even more resilient than the previous ones, and yet it was also absolutely powerless to prevent itself from being destroyed!

As his cultivation base rose higher and higher, Bai Xiaochun was certain that a mere thought on his part could cause winds to scream in the area, and the sky to grow dim!

The gravekeeper was trembling as his energy faded. He panted for breath as his eyes grew cloudier. And yet, he continued to pour everything he had into Bai Xiaochun, causing his cultivation base to rise higher and higher!

Rumbling sounds could be heard as Bai Xiaochun's Live Forever Nascent Soul emerged... and began to climb toward the Live Forever Deva realm!

“Both methods involve destroying the world. As for all of the living beings within the world... they would be ejected out into the wider world beyond....” The gravekeeper was weak beyond measure now, but he gritted his teeth and continued with his explanation, as if to provide a defense for everything he had done in his life!

“There are only two options, Bai Xiaochun. So you tell me... could I really just destroy the world to let the Celestial out?!?! As

for Ghostmother, she possessed the coordinates to this world all along, which was why she could leave! It would not have been possible for her to take someone as powerful as the Celestial past the world net!

“My mission is still not complete. I must create a celestial via the Undying Live Forever Technique, or perhaps a quasi-celestial. Without that person... how could I possibly agree to destroy the world!?!?”

As his voice echoed out, he began to fade away. Despite how his energy flagged, he gritted his teeth and drew upon his scant remaining cultivation base and life force, as well as the powers of the precious treasure that was Arch-Emperor City, to transform his own energy into Live Forever power that Bai Xiaochun could absorb!

As a result, Bai Xiaochun broke through into the Live Forever Deva realm... a level which surpassed his previous Heaven-Dao level by far!

At this point, the fourth sealing mark of the Live Forever Codex appeared... and was destroyed!

After his breakthrough, the Live Forever power within him continued to surge!

The next watershed mark was... the Live Forever Demigod realm!

“Live Forever Demigod realm... Live Forever Demigod....” The gravekeeper chuckled weakly. Although he was fading away into nothing, he still refused to give up, a fact which was evidenced by the happiness and contentment within his laughter!

“Bai Xiaochun, I will use my last bit of energy... to push you into the Live Forever Demigod realm!

“I only regret that I cannot use the power of this world to push your Undying Live Forever Technique all the way into the true Celestial Realm.... I suppose... that a quasi-celestial will still do!”

Laughing contentedly, he performed an incantation gesture with his left hand and pointed out.

“Arch-Emperor Treasure!”

All of Arch-Emperor City began to tremble, filling the hearts of the people inside it with shock. That included the Grand Heavenmaster, the Arch-Emperor, and the four heavenly kings, as well as the heavenly dukes and marquises!

Even more shocking was that all of the heavenly marquis pagodas and heavenly duke pagodas... simultaneously collapsed!!

A shocking energy burst into the third portion of the city, pouring into the gravekeeper and then passing through him into Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun felt like his mind was being struck by lightning, and he could barely breathe. Massive amounts of energy pushed into him, causing his Live Forever power to climb higher and higher. In the blink of an eye, he went from the early Deva Realm to the great circle!

Then, the Live Forever power converged and prepared for a final assault!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!!

Bai Xiaochun felt like the world was spinning. Crashing booms filled him with heaven-rending, earth-crushing intensity as his cultivation base... broke through again!!

The Live Forever Demigod!!

This was the final level of the Live Forever Codex!

The final sealing mark of the Live Forever Codex appeared, and was crushed with impunity! Bai Xiaochun trembled as every portion of his body seemed to link to each other perfectly!

The time had come for the gravekeeper to meet his ultimate end; his right hand was already transforming into ash. The magical

power of Arch-Emperor Dynasty seemed incapable of fully transforming into Live Forever power....

Bai Xiaochun's place in the Live Forever Codex was equivalent to the early Demigod Realm, and seemed incapable of progressing further. However, things were not over yet. It was at this point that Bai Xiaochun's demigod cultivation base began to fuse with his Undying Codex fleshly body!

When that fusion was finished, the Undying Live Forever Technique would be whole!

If he had achieved all of this by normal cultivation, there would have been no need to fuse them. That process would have occurred naturally along the way. But now... a proper fusion was vitally important!

Bai Xiaochun trembled violently, a look of fear flickering on his face as he sat there cross-legged, incapable of moving. He was fully concentrated on fusing the complete Undying Live Forever Technique, to the point where his consciousness began to fade. The Undying Live Forever Technique became like a vortex trying to suck him into it, to completely transform him, to make him... the ultimate successor of the Undying Live Forever Technique!

He was not an Arch-Emperor... he surpassed the Arch-Emperors!

As his consciousness faded, his heart filled with complicated emotions. At that point, he looked over at the gravekeeper, and noticed that the man was smiling.

As he smiled, the gravekeeper began to fade away as surely as if some huge hand were erasing him out of existence.

"Mission... accomplished...." he murmured. Looking at Bai Xiaochun for the final time, he clasped hands in respect.

He felt guilty about what he had done to Bai Xiaochun, but not guilty about his overall success. He knew that the day would soon come when Daoist Heavenspan realized the truth about how to

leave the world. At that time, a deadly battle would surely take place, which would end in the destruction of the world.

The gravekeeper's mission had been to ensure that, before the world ended, a celestial appeared who had cultivated the Undying Live Forever Technique to completion. Or at the very least... a quasi-celestial.

He couldn't stop Daoist Heavenspan, but he could ensure that such a quasi-celestial appeared before the end of the world. It was all to simply accomplish his mission.

To do that, he would use anyone and everyone in any way he could....

He clasped hands respectfully, and bowed. It was a bow he never rose up from. Bai Xiaochun watched as he transformed completely into ash.

A long moment passed. Bai Xiaochun was wrapped up in the Undying Live Forever Technique, and yet, he still managed to murmur, "I still... hate you!"

Chapter 1018: The Despair Of Arch-Emperor City

As the process of completing the fusion of the Undying Live Forever Technique was going on... war still raged outside!

And the fierce fighting at Heavenspan Island had not yet ended!

The entire world was gripped with madness and slaughter!

Although this war between the lands of Heavenspan and the Wildlands had only been going on for a few years now, in terms of the bitterness of the struggle, it was something the likes of which had never occurred before in the history of this world!

A great war had been fought when Daoist Heavenspan rebelled against the Arch-Emperor Dynasty. The dynasty had fallen, and what remained of it had fled to the Wildlands. But not even that war could compare to this one.

Never before had a war been fought in which so many cultivators died in such a short period of time. It virtually defied imagination!

The Wildlands was the battleground, and it had long since been stained crimson with blood. The aura of death and the stench of gore was so intense... that not even the most powerful of winds could dispel it.

More than half of the cultivators from the four regions of the lands of Heavenspan... were dead. Were it not for the strict control maintained by the Celestial, such a high death rate would have already destroyed the morale of the Heavenspan cultivators.

Devas fell in battle left and right, to the point where among the Heavenspan forces, only half of their original force of devas remained.... As for the four demigod patriarchs, so far, none had been killed. However, all of them had taken severe injuries.

Considering that the Heavenspan forces had suffered such mind-

boggling casualties, and yet still maintained the upper hand, it was possible to imagine... how disastrous this war was for the Wildlands!

Of the savage tribes that had once made up the bulk of the Wildlands forces, most had been wiped out....

Seventy percent of the heavenly marquises had perished, and nearly half of the heavenly dukes had been killed in body and soul....

All of the cities of the four heavenly kings had been burned to the ground. The Giant Ghost King's army was mostly intact, but the armies of the other three heavenly kings had suffered roughly eighty percent casualties....

The vast difference between the Giant Ghost King's forces and those of the other heavenly kings was all because of Bai Xiaochun. Not only had he stopped the fighting between the eastern Heavenspan cultivators and the Wildlanders at Giant Ghost City, but he had also killed three of the Heavenspan arcane guards, and destroyed their spell formation.

The other three cities had been routed, and the flight of their armies hampered because of the spell formations. And thus, those battles had nearly turned into massacres.

By now, the Wildlanders were completely surrounded, with ninety percent of their territory lost. The only thing that remained... was Arch-Emperor City!

Arch-Emperor City was where the Wildlanders would make their final stand. If that city fell... then it would mean that the bloodline of the Arch-Emperors was gone forever!

The cultivators from the four rivers were encamped around Arch-Emperor City. Of course, the Heavenspan cultivators still couldn't help but feel exhausted, and were filled with mixed emotions.

It was an exhaustion that ran so deep that most of them were expressionless and numb....

As the years of fighting wore on, virtually all of the cultivators had lost friends and loved ones.... However, there was another death that none of the cultivators from either side of the conflict were aware of. Bai Hao.... Because of his death, the Underworld River had dried up, and the dead souls within it could no longer return to the cycle of reincarnation. They had no choice but to wander heaven and earth.... It was easy to imagine how such a situation quickly became another catastrophe to plague the world.

It also became a powerful portent.... Eventually, the Wildlander soul cultivators began to speculate about what it meant....

“The new Hell-Emperor... must have perished!!” Such speculations inundated the soul cultivators like floodwaters, causing them to tremble and sink further into the darkness of despair. To them, it seemed like the end of the world was nigh. Even the Grand Heavenmaster and the demigod experts felt their hearts being overtaken by anxiety and gloom.

The four heavenly kings' cities had been routed. Ninety percent of their armies were dead. The Heavenspan forces had Arch-Emperor City surrounded. To the people of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty, those things all became a massive blow to any hope for survival that anyone had.... But the death of the Hell-Emperor was even more unimaginable. It was like an attack that landed directly on their hearts and minds!

Those two heavy blows had the Arch-Emperor Dynasty reeling.... In fact, if the Celestial had offered an opportunity for surrender, the Grand Heavenmaster and the other leaders would have definitely been tempted to take it.

Except... the Celestial didn't seem to care about human life at all. He would accept no surrender. He wanted the Wildlands wiped away, all the way down to the grass and roots!

Such orders had long since been passed down to the demigod patriarchs of the four riversource sects. In their exhaustion, they had begun the assault on Arch-Emperor City with all the power they had at their disposal. Their task... was to completely destroy it!

The decisive battle... was beginning!

Booms rang out constantly outside of Arch-Emperor City. It was a precious treasure with powerful defensive shields, but they were being worn down, and could not stand forever against the divine abilities and magical techniques that battered them.

The Giant Ghost Legion, and the armies of the other three heavenly kings, bolstered the innate defensive powers of Arch-Emperor City, giving it the power to make its final stand!

Bloodcurdling shrieks rang out. Booms of self-detonation filled the air. Shouting and howling could be heard all over the battlefield!

The corpse troopers that had once struck fear into the hearts of the Wildlanders were now fully deployed onto the battlefield, and yet, they didn't seem to have much effect on the conflict as a whole.

High above, the demigods fought with utter desperation. The four heavenly kings and the Grand Heavenmaster had all suffered horrific injuries, and yet, were still going all out. As for the Heavenspan forces, they had their four demigod patriarchs, as well as two divine guards from Heavenspan Island!

A total of eleven demigods clashed above, causing the entire world to tremble as if it might collapse....

The Arch-Emperor stood in the highest tower of the imperial palace, looking out at the fighting. A gloomy expression covered his face, but he had a bit of hope in his eyes, hope that the gravekeeper would eventually show his face.

He had no idea that Bai Xiaochun was already in Arch-Emperor City. In his mind, the gravekeeper... was the only hope of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty....

The Arch-Emperor wasn't the only one who waited with such anticipation. The Grand Heavenmaster and the four heavenly kings all harbored a similar hope, as did many of the soul cultivators fighting down below.

The new Hell-Emperor Bai Hao was important in the Arch-Emperor Dynasty. But to the soul cultivators, he was like the earth, whereas the gravekeeper... was like the vast heavens!

Only if the gravekeeper appeared... could the tide turn!

But even as the cultivators of the Arch-Emperor Dynasty continued to place their hope in the gravekeeper... all of Arch-Emperor City suddenly shook violently. The lands around it quaked, and massive crevices snaked out everywhere. In the blink of an eye... an aura of death spread out from Arch-Emperor City, filling all of the Wildlands....

And things were just beginning. That aura of death... continued on to fill all of the lands of Heavenspan....

Mountains seemed to lose their strength and collapse.... Jungles began to wilt and crumble into ash....

It was as if the surface of the world were collapsing! Although it didn't explode... the aura of death that filled it was plain for everyone to detect!

It wasn't just the ground that was affected. The sky in the Wildlands and in the Heavenspan region... began to turn as gray, as if no life force existed in it at all!

Apparently... the entire world... was dying!!

Cultivators, mortals, and all other living beings were suddenly filled with the most profound unease. It felt as if... the entire world were about to fade away into eternity....

All of the cultivators in and around Arch-Emperor City suddenly stopped fighting, and looked around in shock. Those from the Heavenspan region seemed confused, whereas the Wildlander soul cultivators were so stunned that many of them staggered in place. Looks of terror could be seen in their eyes, as well as profound grief that soon turned into rage.

The Arch-Emperor shivered, his eyes lighting up with disbelief as he murmured, “The gravekeeper... has perished. The world... is dying!”

Then he began to laugh bitterly for a moment before a wave of exhaustion overcame him. Staggering backward, he coughed up a massive mouthful of blood.

“There will be no more Arch-Emperors.... We will burn along with the imperial city....” He closed his eyes.

The Grand Heavenmaster and the four heavenly kings looked around with blank expressions and blanker minds. They had all known that the gravekeeper was very weak, but the realization that he had actually perished filled them with despair.

It was made worse by the fact that, along with the death of the gravekeeper... the world itself seemed to be crumbling.

The demigod patriarchs of the four riversource sects were all shaken to the core. However, after looking around momentarily, their eyes lit up with determination. Taking advantage of the sudden blow to the morale of the Wildlanders, they joined forces in a final salvo to destroy the city!

In the briefest of moments, fierce fighting broke out again.... Mountain-toppling, sea-draining force... slammed into Arch-Emperor City!

The defensive shields of the city finally shattered, and the city walls began to fall. The Wildlanders were being pushed back by defeat after defeat. As for the Heavenspan cultivators, most of

them just wanted to be done with the fighting, and thus, killing intent once again rose from within their numbed minds and hearts.

The four demigod patriarchs and the two divine guards reacted similarly. Blood sprayed out of the mouths of the four heavenly kings, and even the Grand Heavenmaster was shoved backward.

There was no hope for the Wildlanders. Only despair. There was no way they could defend themselves from this onslaught. At this point, their minds and wills began to collapse, forcing them to howl in madness.

Even as Arch-Emperor City seemed to be on the verge of falling... fluctuations exploded out from within it that seemed to affect the rapidly spreading aura of death!

Down below in the third section of the city, Bai Xiaochun... opened his eyes!

Chapter 1019: The Aura Of The Arch-Ancestor!

His left eye was golden, and his right eye was crystalline!

They were eyes that were no longer pure and innocent!

After opening, heaven and earth went dim, and the entire world quaked, as if from the hatred contained therein!

As Bai Xiaochun opened his eyes, a blast of wind filled the third level of the city, which rose higher and higher, and then erupted out into the open!

The intensity of the fluctuations caused everyone outside... to be shaken to the core!

On Heavenspan Island, the Blood Ancestor was still fighting the Celestial, but had been seriously injured, and was hovering on the verge of death. But when he felt those fluctuations, he suddenly began to laugh hoarsely.

“Heavenspan, you lowlife, do you feel that...?”

The Celestial’s face had already been green and livid, and now, it turned even more unsightly. Turning to look in the direction of Arch-Emperor City, he said a single name through gritted teeth....

“Bai Xiaochun....”

In Arch-Emperor City, the Giant Ghost King shivered. Expression flickering with disbelief, he looked down toward the ground, clearly more shaken than he had been when he had detected the death of the gravekeeper.

He wasn't the only one to react in such a way. The Spirit Advent King, Nine Serenities King and War Champion King all gasped and looked down at the ground, their expressions those of disbelief.

The Grand Heavenmaster was also shocked, and despite the level

of his willpower, couldn't stop from uttering an exclamation.

“This aura....”

The entire world shook as the grayness of death which filled the sky began to swirl into a huge vortex. It was as if the world, in its final death throes, was using its last bit of energy to cry out for the final time....

The demigod patriarchs of the four riversource sects, as well as the divine guards from Heavenspan, were visibly taken aback. All six suddenly felt profoundly uneasy, a feeling which rapidly transformed into terror!

Patriarch Starry Sky was especially terrified. Glancing down at the ground in astonishment, he realized that this aura was very familiar to him.

“Bai. Xiao. Chun....”

Meanwhile, the Arch-Emperor was in the imperial palace, his eyes shining with astonishment. He could sense much better than everyone else that, deep beneath the ground, there were fluctuations... that resonated with the aura of his own blood!

In fact, the intensity of these fluctuations surpassed his own.... To the Arch-Emperor, it seemed completely impossible, and yet... it was happening right here and now!

As the world was shaken, winds screamed in the lower regions of Arch-Emperor City. Bai Xiaochun sat there cross-legged, his eyes open, unmoving. Instead of rising to his feet, he simply took in a long, deep breath.

With that breath, his Undying Live Forever Technique completed the last of its fusion. His cultivation base was now in perfect condition. He was at the peak of the demigod level when it came to his fleshly body, and his cultivation base was in the early Demigod Realm. When those powers merged, his aura seemed ancient and archaic, and so powerful... that the entire world was willing to

acquiesce to him!

He felt like... the ruler of the entire world! It felt like... the entire world approved of him!

A single thought from him could cause all living things to submit. His gaze could cause mountains and rivers to rise up out of nothing!

It was a level of power Bai Xiaochun had never experienced before. And yet, it didn't make him happy. Instead, his complicated feelings grew even more gloomy.

This power had come at the sacrifice of Du Lingfei and Bai Hao. In fact, countless other lives in the world had been cast away. Had he been given the choice, Bai Xiaochun would never have chosen to do this.

But the gravekeeper made the choice for him. The gravekeeper had been willing to sacrifice anyone and everyone to accomplish his mission. Therefore, Bai Xiaochun was both grateful, and at the same time, filled with hatred. The emotions he felt were profoundly complicated and conflicted. He was grateful to the gravekeeper for saving his life, and for bestowing incredible good fortune onto him. But that gratitude could not make up for the death of Bai Hao and the misery of Du Lingfei.

And thus, he was filled with hatred. Hatred at his own powerlessness, and hatred toward the gravekeeper for everything he had done to accomplish his so-called mission. And yet, that hatred could not wipe away his gratitude for having his own life saved, and for being blessed with good fortune. In the end... he could only be battered by complicated and mixed emotions.

However, in the final analysis, it was Daoist Heavenspan who had truly orchestrated the greatest villainy. And therefore, Bai Xiaochun's hatred for him towered to the heavens!

Bai Xiaochun knew that with the gravekeeper having perished...

it wouldn't be long before the entire world crumbled. When that happened... it would truly become an enormous tomb for everyone who lived on it.

He could sense the epic battle being fought on Heavenspan Island... and he could sense the bad condition Arch-Emperor City was in.

A long moment passed, and then he spoke in a voice that surpassed heavenly thunder in its intensity. "So many people dead.... Daoist Heavenspan, why... are you still alive?!?!?"

Energy surging mightily, he slowly stood up!

As he did, the cultivators outside of Arch-Emperor City felt as though earth dragons were writhing beneath the ground. Everyone was so shocked that they didn't dare to keep fighting; they all began to back away from each other.

They instinctively began to feel terror and dread, regardless of the level of their cultivation base. Even the demigods felt that way!

As the ground quaked, Bai Xiaochun took a step forward!

The instant his foot touched the ground in front of him, he vanished, to appear... in midair above Arch-Emperor City!

In that same moment, the vortex up above began to emit intense rumbling sounds. Even as the world seemed to be descending into the gray of death, multi-colored light erupted out from Bai Xiaochun to shine on everything around him!

This light filled the world, deeply shaking all cultivators. Gasps could be heard as everyone looked up at Bai Xiaochun, their cultivation bases trembling, their souls shaking. Deep within the very being of everyone present, they suddenly felt something tugging at them, as if from within their blood!

It was... reverence for the first generation Arch-Emperor!

Within the imperial palace, the reigning Arch-Emperor trembled,

and his eyes began to shine. He more than anyone else could sense that he was not looking at the same Bai Xiaochun that he had seen in the past. This Bai Xiaochun seemed like... the first generation Arch-Emperor!

“Arch-Ancestor....”

It was a reverence and respect that came from within his blood! Because of it, the reigning Arch-Emperor immediately... dropped to his knees!

Although he had been turned into little more than a puppet ruler by the Grand Heavenmaster, and would never have bent the knee to the man, he was now kneeling to Bai Xiaochun! In the past, the only person he would ever have done the same thing to was... the gravekeeper!

“Kui Endao offers greetings, [Arch-Ancestor!](#)”

As the Arch-Emperor dropped to his knees, other figures flew up into the air to offer enthusiastic greetings, all of them descendants of the Arch-Emperor bloodline.

Their cries rolled out into Arch-Emperor City, to be heard by the soul cultivators, heavenly marquises, and heavenly dukes.... As they heeded the instinctual calls from their souls, they began to drop down and kowtow to Bai Xiaochun.

“Greetings, Arch-Ancestor!”

“Greetings... Arch-Ancestor!!”

As the fanatical cries of the soul cultivators filled the air, the Giant Ghost King and his fellow demigods, as well as the six demigods from the lands of Heavenspan, all reacted with open shock. Even they, mighty demigods, felt their souls tugging at them, telling them to do what all of the other cultivators down below were doing.

It was something that was branded into their souls as people of this world, a mark left upon anyone and everyone from the

moment they were born. As of this moment, it was telling them that Bai Xiaochun was their emperor!

The power radiating out from Bai Xiaochun's blood caused their hearts to fill with reverence, and left them totally shaken by the unprecedentedly powerful pressure that weighed down from him.

The Giant Ghost King was the first to react. Bowing deeply, he said, "Greetings, Arch-Ancestor!"

Next came the Spirit Advent King, the Nine Serenities King, and then the War Champion King. After that was the Grand Heavenmaster, whose eyes were filled with profound emotion, and deep respect!

There was even more pressure crushing down onto the six experts from the lands of Heavenspan. They trembled both from the pressure of the Celestial, and the instinctual reverence that came from their souls. All six were almost immediately overwhelmed.

They struggled for a long moment, until Bai Xiaochun looked over at them, seemingly connecting to their souls, and filling their reeling minds with waves of shock.

At that point, all of them, even Patriarch Starry Sky, averted their gazes... and bowed in respectful greeting!

As they did, all of the cultivators from the Heavenspan region felt similar prompting from their souls, and began to bow.... Mighty waves of sound filled the entire Wildlands....

"Greetings... Arch-Ancestor!!"

Bai Xiaochun had long dreamed of having so many people looking at him, to have crowds worshipping his glory. But right now... these things gave him no pleasure. He looked around at the groveling masses for a moment, then turned his attention to Heavenspan Island.

Almost immediately, his eyes turned as red as blood, and began

to radiate an intense murderous aura. Ignoring everyone else, he blurred into motion, becoming a blast of wind that left even the demigods shaken as he headed toward Heavenspan Island.

As he closed in, he spoke in a voice that battered the ears of everyone in the world, a voice filled with hatred and madness.

“Daoist Heavenspan, why... are you still alive?!?!”

In this case “Kui” is the character that I translate into “Arch” in Arch-Emperor. Technically, it's supposed to be a name. When used as a name, it doesn't make sense to translate it into "Arch". However, in the grand scheme of things, I didn't want to transliterate it for use in the title and the name of the government. Otherwise we would have the Kui-Emperor, which has no meaning. There is importance in the meaning of this name, and considering that it virtually never gets used as a name, I chose early on to translate it

Chapter 1020: About To Begin!

Rumbling sounds echoed out without cease!

Crevices and ravines continued to open up everywhere in the Wildlands, made worse by the shocking energy radiating out from Bai Xiaochun. Countless mountain peaks crumbled, and numerous plains caved in. The entire world seemed to be breaking apart!

The energy at play here seemed to be more than the world could handle, to the point where even the sky began to crack into pieces. All living beings were overwhelmed by the sensation that they were experiencing an apocalypse.

Cities trembled, and sects were shaken. Living creatures everywhere sensed that the end was nigh!

Cultivators from both the Wildlands and the Heavenspan region all sensed the same thing... that the world was dying around them....

Unless someone or something intervened, it wouldn't be very long... before the world cracked to pieces!

It actually had nothing to do with Bai Xiaochun himself. The process began... in the moment that the gravekeeper died!

As everyone in the world looked around in astonishment, Bai Xiaochun sped through the Wildlands toward Heavenspan Island, his energy skyrocketing the entire way....

There almost seemed to be no end in sight, as though the hatred and anger in Bai Xiaochun's heart would continue to push his energy higher and higher no matter what happened!

Soon, he was in the Deadmire. There were no longer any restrictive spells locking the area down or protecting it, and as such, it was also beginning to fill with crevices and rifts....

Heaven and earth were changing. The end of days had come! Bai

Xiaochun could tell that beyond the shadow of a doubt!

The hatred and anger in his heart manifested as a virtually undispellable murderous aura. His killing intent toward the Celestial burned with the ultimate madness.

He yelled at the top of his lungs as he shot through the air, his eyes crimson with rage. He had never been like this before in his life, so consumed with hatred that it didn't even occur to him to be scared of death. He didn't care about his desire to live forever. The only things he could think about... were Du Lingfei's bitter tears, and how Bai Hao had kowtowed to him before passing away....

Those two images were like sharp knives that stabbed through his heart all the way into his soul!

He was truly insane!

“Daoist Heavenspan!!” It was as if Bai Xiaochun had been reborn out of death, and none of his happiness had been passed on to the new version of him. The only thing that had been passed on... was his desire to kill the Celestial!

He demanded blood. The blood of the Celestial!!

Never could he forget the look in Du Lingfei's eyes when the Celestial pushed her head toward his. She hadn't wanted to hurt him, but had been given no choice. He could never forget how Bai Hao had burned himself into nothing to save him. Bai Xiaochun wanted to cry, but at the moment, there were no tears. Rage and enmity had burned them away, turning him into a being that sought only vengeance!

Although he had been driven into madness, he still possessed all his faculties. He knew that the Celestial was incredibly powerful, and that although he himself had reached the great circle of the Undying Live Forever Technique, he would probably die if he fought him.

Unless he achieved a cultivation base breakthrough, and truly

stepped into the Mahayana Realm... he wouldn't have the battle prowess to crush the Celestial!

But that didn't reduce his killing intent by even an iota. After all... he still had a trump card at his disposal, that being the world treasure of the north. Normally speaking, he wouldn't use it, considering the heavy price that would be paid to do so. But now, the world was already crumbling around him....

"I have other tools at my disposal as well... other than the world treasure of the north!" Even as Bai Xiaochun burst out of the Deadmire and entered the lands of Heavenspan, his mind spun with numerous ideas and plans.

"The Undying Codex has five secret magics. As for the Live Forever Codex... it also has five powerful divine abilities. However, they're manifested in a different way. Once someone has mastered the entire Live Forever Codex, then the magic will take shape according to their personal Dao!" Within Bai Xiaochun's mind floated five divine abilities that he had created after mastering the Live Forever Codex, divine abilities which were powerful enough to destroy anything in creation!

Each person who cultivated the Live Forever Codex would produce different divine abilities. As for Bai Xiaochun's, they were an amalgamation of his subconscious mind, and the Daoist magics that he had cultivated in his life. And he was confident that... by combining them with the fleshly body power provided by the Undying Codex, they would make him far more formidable than anyone who had mastered a single one of the codices!

"And I also have... my moonflower!" Eyes shining as he pierced through the air, he suddenly waved his finger in the direction of the north, and sent a stream of divine sense in that very direction!

"Moonflower, baby!"

In response to his call, countless moonflowers suddenly burst into the air from the jungles and ravines in the north.

They became like a cloud of dandelion seeds that streamed high up into the sky....

From what he could tell, there were millions upon millions of them, filling the sky as they swirled together into the shape of an enormous moon.

At a certain point, they vanished... to appear right next to Bai Xiaochun!

Seemingly delighted, the moonflowers swirled around Bai Xiaochun, each and every one of them radiating a sense of familiarity and love. For the first time, Bai Xiaochun's freezing heart warmed slightly.

"Moonflower, baby, are you willing... to help me fight!?" The response from the massive collection of moonflowers was a burst of fearless battle spirit!

Bai Xiaochun smiled in response. However, his eyes were fixed on Heavenspan Island, and they were as cold as ice. Without the slightest hesitation or anxiety, he suddenly summoned his turtle-wok!

In response to the calling of his will, the millions upon millions of dandelion seeds began to converge together, eventually transforming into a single seed, which shot toward the turtle-wok!

Bai Xiaochun had already made the decision that, in order to make his moonflower stronger... he would bless it with a spirit enhancement!

Although he couldn't conjure a twenty-two-colored flame, considering the level of his cultivation base, producing a twenty-one-colored flame was nothing difficult!

He waved his hand, causing countless vengeful souls to stream toward him. As they did, he started with a one-colored flame, and conjured all the way up to a twenty-colored flame, using them to push the moonflower all the way to a twentyfold spirit

enhancement. Then he conjured a twenty-one-colored flame!!

He didn't hesitate for a moment to throw that flame into the turtle-wok. Instantly, rumbling sounds echoed out, and bright light began to shine out of the lines on the wok. Gradually... the design of the spirit enhancement appeared on the moonflower!

Its aura was now vastly different than before. As its energy surged, it began to grow larger and larger, until it was a 30,000-meter-tall, shocking flower....

Even more astonishing was the fact that it radiated the aura of the great circle of the Demigod Realm!

However, it still seemed to view him just as lovingly as before. Accelerating, he had the moonflower shrink down, and then tossed it in his bag of holding. Soon... he was flying over the Heavenspan Sea!

Cracks could be heard as rifts were torn open into the air, none of which showed any signs of closing back up!

As he passed over the sea, the nearby water froze up.... Bai Xiaochun's explosive aura was reaching a pinnacle!

And his eyes were completely fixed on Heavenspan Island!

As he closed in, he could see the Blood Ancestor, his entire body wreathed in flames, going all out to deliver a shocking fist strike. When the blow landed, a huge vortex sprang up, and the Blood Ancestor began to fade away.

"You're finally here, Bai Xiaochun! My mission is accomplished.... Help me... to take care... of her...." The Blood Ancestor threw his head back and laughed uproariously. He had given his life to lock down the Celestial, and therefore a gleam of contentment could be seen in his eyes as he looked in the direction of the north, and then faded out of existence....

He didn't specify who he wanted Bai Xiaochun to take care of. He was sure that Bai Xiaochun already knew.

Bai Xiaochun nodded at the Blood Ancestor as he faded away. Then, he fixed his bloodshot, livid gaze... at the Celestial, who hovered in the air above the island!

“Daoist Heavenspan!” he said, the words crackling like heavenly thunder!

Heaven and earth crumbled around them!

The most breathtaking battle of all time was about to begin!

Chapter 1021: Crocodilian Head!

Daoist Heavenspan was in the nastiest of moods. Originally, he had assumed that the Blood Ancestor wouldn't be able to delay him for more than a short moment. However, the Blood Ancestor had been saving up life force for 10,000 years, and also had some secret methods imparted to him by the gravekeeper. Combined with his madness and the fact that he had ignited himself for a final burst of power, he had been able to keep Daoist Heavenspan completely locked down.

“Bai Xiaochun!” Daoist Heavenspan said through gritted teeth. He seemed supremely frustrated, and also no less furious than Bai Xiaochun. Over and over again, he had watched his ultimate desires crushed by the gravekeeper at the last minute, turned into nothing more than pipe dreams.

However, this time, things were playing out slightly differently!

In addition to the anger in his eyes, there was something else shining brightly.

“Who would have thought that you would come here of your own volition? At least you've saved me the trouble of tracking you down myself. At last... I can refine you into an Undying Live Forever Pill!” Licking his lips, he chuckled and waved his hands out in front of him, causing rumbling sounds to fill heaven and earth as the will of the world itself converged on his person. Then, he began to walk toward Bai Xiaochun.

With every step he took, the will of the world grew stronger, until it became a mountain-toppling, sea-draining pressure that weighed down on Bai Xiaochun.

Earlier, not even the Blood Ancestor, a descendant of the Arch-Emperors, had been able to stand up to this.

In fact, it was because of the will of the world that the Blood

Ancestor had burned his own blood to get the power he needed to drive his Undying Technique. That was what had enabled him to lock Daoist Heavenspan down for so long.

But now... the will of the world didn't seem to affect Bai Xiaochun at all! He had mastered the Undying Live Forever Technique, and could now accept the title of Arch-Ancestor. He also conformed to the will of the world, and in fact... was also the ruler of this heaven and earth!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were bright red as he stared at the Celestial walking toward him. His killing intent raged as he too took a step forward, whereupon the will of the world began to bless him!

It was as if the entire world had been split in two because of Bai Xiaochun and the Celestial. They strode toward each other until they were only 300 meters apart, both of them surging with different aspects of the power of the very world in which they lived!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!!

When they slammed into each other, it was like mountains and rivers colliding, creating a deafening boom that echoed out across the frozen Heavenspan Sea. Seemingly incapable of sustaining the force, the sea began to split apart....

At the same time, Heavenspan Island, which had already been mostly destroyed by Bai Hao's flames, had reached the point where it couldn't stand any longer, and collapsed!

It was a holy land that represented the ultimate authority and power in the Heavenspan Realm, but now... it sank down into the Heavenspan Sea. As it did, a huge whirlpool formed, like a giant mouth of seawater.

"How amusing!" the Celestial said. With that, he threw his head back and laughed uproariously. Despite having just fought bitterly with the Blood Ancestor, he was clearly just as powerful as before.

Striding forward, he pointed up into the sky!

“Four rivers form the heavenly bones! A golden sea to act as flesh!” His voice seemed to contain the might of the heavens, a boundless power that would force reality to conform to his wishes. All of a sudden, what appeared to be the soul projections of the four rivers of the lands of Heavenspan shot toward the Celestial.

At the same time, Heavenspan Seawater began to rise up into the sky, taking shape around those souls.... to shape the enormous hand that had caused despair to rise up in Bai Hao's heart, and kept the Blood Ancestor in check!

Unfortunately for the Celestial, the gravekeeper had died, and the world was withering away. Because of that, his Daoist magic had faltered during his battle with the Blood Ancestor, and had been destroyed.

But now, the gravekeeper was gone, along with his influence. As a result, there was now nothing to interfere with the Celestial's control of the will of the world, despite how it was split. Furthermore, he was far more familiar with that will than Bai Xiaochun.

The Celestial waved his arm, and the gigantic hand began to fall down onto Bai Xiaochun from above!

Bai Xiaochun looked up with a very somber expression. He could sense the pure power of the four rivers within that huge hand, as well as the aura of the Heavenspan Sea. Although it looked like nothing but a hand, in truth... it was like all of the lands of Heavenspan combined!

He could not withstand such a blow! It didn't matter how powerful his fleshly body was, he would be felled by such power!

At the same time, he knew that he couldn't compare to the ancient Celestial when it came to control over the power of this world. However, he did not shrink back. Eyes crimson, he looked

up at the huge hand, threw his head back and shouted, “Who cares if I can’t match up to you, Celestial!?!?”

The power of the Live Forever Technique coursed through him, which he then channeled into a Daoist magic called... the Waterswamp Kingdom!

“Waterswamp!” he said, waving his arm through the air. He was confident that, with his powerful cultivation base, the mysterious divine beast... would come forth with more power than ever before.

Rumbling sounds immediately echoed out as the Heavenspan Sea... transformed into a vast, watery swamp!!

“Kingdom!!” Without any hesitation, he slapped his hands together, a sound which was accompanied by the roar of a beast from another world. Heaven and earth trembled from the sound of it, a sound that even the powerful Celestial was shocked to hear.

It was a howl of excitement and joy, as a moment came which that mysterious beast had been waiting a long time for! Thanks to Bai Xiaochun’s current cultivation base, he could now open a true gap to allow the beast into the world!

The entire Heavenspan Sea seemed to become a huge mouth that howled with deafening volume. This time, instead of mountain peaks rising up... an entire continent became visible!!

It was pitch black, not because it was covered with soil, but because it was covered with a forest of scale-like ridges! This continent was so large it was almost impossible to describe!

Each scale that covered the continent was as large as Heavenspan Island had been! As the continent rose up into the air, it was possible to see that, on its bottom, were row upon row of what looked like inverted mountain peaks!!

If one looked closely, it was possible to see that this was actually not a continent. And the mountain peaks... were not mountain

peaks! They were actually razor-sharp teeth! This continent... was the upper jaw of an enormous beast!!

Next came the lower jaw.... When it was all visible, it looked like the mouth of a gigantic crocodile, rising up from within the Heavenspan Sea! Furthermore, its eyes were bright red... making them look exactly like Bai Xiaochun's eyes!!

The crocodilian head rose up and opened its mouth; compared to it, Bai Xiaochun and the Celestial were like tiny bugs! Howling, the crocodilian head lunged toward the enormous hand of the world... and chomped it up!!

Bai Xiaochun was deeply shaken by what he was seeing. Looking at the enormous crocodilian head, he couldn't help but marvel at how everything was playing out. Never could he have imagined that his life essence spirit was so big... that it seemed capable of almost filling the entire world he lived in!

On any other occasion, he might have been happy, but right now, there was no time for such thoughts. He looked up as the enormous hand of the world met his Waterswamp Kingdom beast, whereupon a heaven-rending, earth-crushing boom erupted out!

The shockwave created a tempest that filled the entire Heavenspan Sea region as... the hand of the world collapsed into pieces!

As that happened, almost all of the mountains in the four river regions collapsed. However, Bai Xiaochun's life essence spirit also couldn't sustain the force. After chomping down on the hand of the world, it faded away.

It was gone, not dead, of that Bai Xiaochun was certain. Up til now, his life essence spirit had only come as a projection; he would need a higher cultivation base to summon it in full.

Eyes glittering, he considered summoning it again, but before he could, the Celestial threw his hands up, an unprecedentedly

serious expression on his face. On the finger of one of his hands was a ring which he took off and threw down toward the Heavenspan Sea!

“Seal!” he shouted coolly.

Chapter 1022: Four Beasts!

As the words left the Celestial's mouth, the falling ring erupted with seven-colored light, which spread out to illuminate all of the Heavenspan Sea, and the collapsing heaven and earth seemed to solidify. However, this was not because of any show of goodwill on the part of the Celestial. No, he just wanted to seal the world!

Even he was shocked by the Daoist magic Bai Xiaochun had just unleashed, and therefore, he would ensure that no strange gates to other worlds could be opened, and no enormous beasts could appear!

“Apparently I underestimated the Daoist magics that can be unleashed here.... Waterswamp Kingdom....” The Celestial's eyes glittered with bright light as he spoke. “Unfortunately for you, that magic won't work now!”

With the wave of his hand, the Celestial unleashed the sealing power of the ring, causing it to rush in Bai Xiaochun's direction.

Bai Xiaochun had an equally serious expression on his face. He knew that the Celestial had been the lord of this world for many years, and had all sorts of reserve powers at his disposal. Not only could Bai Xiaochun not match up with him in terms of control of the power of the world, but he could also tell that the Celestial had so many techniques and items that it defied imagination.

The ring he had just used emanated the most ancient of auras, something that left Bai Xiaochun with no doubts that it was a precious treasure. Although it likely couldn't match up to a world treasure, it surely had a very shocking origin.

The sealing power which was currently descending onto him had a will of extermination in it, and yet, Bai Xiaochun didn't shrink back. Instead, he stepped forward... and used the Undying Hex to slip past it!

Virtually all types of seals and restrictive spells were useless against Bai Xiaochun. Even as he passed through the sealing power, he utilized his Mountain Shaking Bash, which caused him to accelerate rapidly toward the Celestial. Then he unleashed the Throat Crushing Grasp.

However, it was at this point that Bai Xiaochun's expression flickered. Without any hesitation, he suddenly danced backward! However... he was too slow. A cynical smile spread out on the Celestial's face.

"You really think someone like me would be scared of that life essence spirit of yours?! And how could I not know that the Undying Hex of the Undying Codex can allow you to pierce through all types of sealing magic...? You might be able to avoid the sealing mark, but you can't avoid the true power of my magical item! You've fallen right into my trap!" Laughing uproariously, he waved his arms, causing the sealing power to suddenly fragment and shatter.... As it did, it became a destructive force that rushed toward Bai Xiaochun from all sides.

The use of the sealing power had just been a ruse! The Celestial's true goal had been to distract Bai Xiaochun, get him close, and then use the true power of his precious treasure!

If one could view the scene from high above, they would see that Bai Xiaochun was now surrounded by mountain-toppling, sea-draining force that formed something like a huge ring around him, growing smaller and smaller with every passing moment....

The destructive power skyrocketed with every moment that passed, causing Bai Xiaochun's face to fall from the sensation of deadly crisis that filled him.

There was nothing he could do to fight back. The ring closed down in the blink of an eye, and the only thing he could do was reach out with his right hand, using it as a stand-in for his entire body!

Intense pain stabbed through his right arm as the ring closed in around his flesh. As it did, the powers of regeneration within his flesh fought back against the ring.

The Celestial frowned at how quickly Bai Xiaochun had reacted in this moment of crisis. Not only was he frustrated because of how difficult Bai Xiaochun was to deal with, he was left marveling at the shocking powers of the Undying Codex.

“So, I still need to pay a bit of a price to end things....” The Celestial shook his head, then blurred into motion. Even as Bai Xiaochun’s powers of regeneration worked against the binding of the ring, the Celestial unleashed another spectacular divine ability!

Booms rang out as Bai Xiaochun fought back, and shockwaves spread out in all directions. However, Daoist Heavenspan’s energy continued to rise; despite only being a quasi-celestial, he had plenty of reserve powers that could push his battle prowess very close to the true Mahayana Realm.

Bai Xiaochun’s cultivation base was lower than his, and he also had his right hand bound up. He shouldn’t have been a match for Daoist Heavenspan, and yet, because of the heaven-defying powers of regeneration that came with the Undying Live Forever Technique, he could recover from injuries far more quickly than even the Blood Ancestor. As a result... he was on equal footing with the Celestial in a fight!

Blue veins bulged out on Bai Xiaochun’s face and neck as his right hand clenched into a fist. By pouring all of the powers of regeneration he had at his disposal at the ring, as well as the full might of his fleshly body, he was finally able to overwhelm the precious treasure until it exploded!

When that happened, Bai Xiaochun’s battle prowess began to rise rapidly yet again. Clenching his hand into a fist, he struck out, causing a huge vortex to rumble toward the Celestial.

The Celestial snorted coldly and backed up. Performing a right-

handed incantation gesture, he waved his finger and spoke in a cold voice.

“Gluttonous flood snake!”

All of a sudden, from within the depths of the significantly depleted Heavenspan Seawater, a roar erupted that shook heaven and earth, accompanied by a shocking aura.

Water showered down in all directions as a 30,000-meter-long creature appeared. It was very much like a flood dragon, with the body of a snake, and a huge 3,000-meter-long head that was vaguely dragon-like in appearance. Overall, it looked fierce to the extreme!

Instantly, powerful fluctuations rolled out in all directions!

“Fantastic crocodile!”

Things weren't over yet. The Celestial performed another incantation gesture, causing roars to echo out from all four of the Heavenspan Rivers. Along with the roars came four golden crocodiles, which merged together to form a single... 30,000-meter-long, four-headed golden crocodile!

“Gloom bird!”

All of a sudden, a huge roc appeared in the sky, howling in such a way that it caused everything to tremble!

Closer inspection revealed that the roc was covered with rotting flesh, beneath which were dry bones! This bird... was actually a creature that had been dead for countless years!

“Sludge giant!”

Next, the lands in the southern part of the Heavenspan region exploded, and an enormous stonebeetle crawled up from their depths. Everything around it immediately fossilized, causing massive white streaks to be left behind it as it crawled forth.

“I fought the gravekeeper for many years, Bai Xiaochun. I have

profound reserve powers the likes of which no one in the world could possibly contend with. As for you... what the hell makes you think you can come fight me!?”

The Celestial waved his finger at Bai Xiaochun, sending all four of the beasts rushing in his direction!

Three of the animals were of little note to Bai Xiaochun. However, he had seen one of those golden crocodiles on numerous occasions. Of course, he could never have imagined that there were four of them... and that they belonged to the Celestial!!

Shockingly, all of these beasts pulsed with the power of the great circle of the Demigod Realm!

Clearly, the fact that the Blood Ancestor had fought with the Celestial for so long was suspicious, considering how powerful the former was.... Granted, the Blood Ancestor was extraordinary, and had succeeded in buying time. However, the Celestial couldn't possibly have been so out of sorts after fighting him. Obviously... the Celestial had been waiting for the gravekeeper to succeed with his plan!

The gravekeeper had been plotting against the Celestial, but the Celestial... had also been plotting against the gravekeeper!

He had been waiting for Bai Xiaochun to arrive, but more importantly, had been waiting for the gravekeeper to die! The person the Celestial feared the most was the gravekeeper, a fear that had only grown deeper over the years in which the gravekeeper, despite growing weaker and weaker, had defeated him at every turn.

Now that the gravekeeper was dead, the Celestial could finally breathe a sigh of relief. Everything had been complicated before, but now, all he had to do was consume Bai Xiaochun to get his Undying Live Forever Pill!

Such thoughts flashed through Bai Xiaochun's mind in the

shortest of times.

“Considering how much of a schemer Daoist Heavenspan is,” he thought, “he must have something up his sleeve to make him completely and utterly confident in being able to win in the end! And there’s no way... that his true secret weapon is these four beasts!” He immediately began to back up. In this life-or-death battle with the Celestial, he had to maintain complete concentration. The Celestial... was the paragon entity in this world, and Bai Xiaochun knew that there was no room for slip-ups. If he made a mistake now, he would be dead forever!

Chapter 1023: Heavenspan Daogates

Unfortunately, only the gravekeeper had the ability to outthink the Celestial. Bai Xiaochun had only spent a few short years on the path of cultivation, making it impossible for him to compare to the Celestial in terms of plotting and scheming. Although he had somewhat of an idea of what the Celestial was thinking, there were too many clues that he couldn't pick up on.

Furthermore, there was no time to sit around thinking about the matter. The fight between the two of them was one in which life and death hung in the balance at every moment. Bai Xiaochun couldn't afford to be distracted, and therefore fully concentrated on the four beasts that were currently charging toward him.

The gluttonous flood snake and the fantastic crocodile were both fantastically large, and were currently coming at him from the left and the right, clearly intent on ripping him to shreds!

At the same time, the sludge giant and the gloom bird were coming at him from the front and behind, their piercing cries shattering the air around them!

All of them radiated the fluctuations of the great circle of the Demigod Realm, giving birth to windstorms that could change the face of heaven and earth. From the look of things, they were not going to give Bai Xiaochun even the shadow of a chance to escape!

In that moment of crisis, Bai Xiaochun unhesitatingly slapped his bag of holding and said, "Moonflower!"

The instant the words came out of his mouth, an aura erupted out that, even on its own, surpassed the auras of the four incoming beasts!

Rumbling sounds could be heard as nine bright green vines shot out at high speed. Following the vines... was an enormous moonflower made of an infinitude of flower petals!

An aura from beyond the heavens shook the entire area as the huge flower towered overhead! If the gravekeeper were alive, and the world were not withering to death, the world would instinctively attempt to crush this flower. But now... the will of the world was fragmented, and the moonflower erupted with shocking, otherworldly power!

In fact, it seemed to pulse with something like a Heaven-Dao aura!

RUUUUUUUUMBLE!

It was fully 30,000 meters tall, and radiated an aura of complete savagery. In addition, it glittered with brilliant designs.... In that moment, a shocking roar erupted from the moonflower!

Roar!

Everything in the area began to shake, and the tempest that the four beasts had created was ripped to shreds!

The moonflower didn't even need any direction from Bai Xiaochun. Even as the roar echoed out, the flower broke up into countless petals that streamed out in order to wipe all traces of the beasts out of existence!

In the blink of an eye, the moonflower and the four beasts began to fight with utter ferocity.

Daoist Heavenspan's eyes glittered in surprise because of Bai Xiaochun's moonflower. However, he merely glanced at it for a moment before heading directly toward Bai Xiaochun.

Bai Xiaochun also began to head toward Daoist Heavenspan, and the two of them began to fight. Surrounded by the battling moonflower and four beasts, they performed incantation gestures and unleashed shocking divine abilities and Daoist magics!

It only took a short time for all parties involved in the fighting to have exchanged thousands of blows.

Although the moonflower was powerful, it was fighting against four opponents, and was gradually losing ground. Eventually, a howl erupted from inside of the flower, and it exploded, creating something like a sea of dandelion petals that surged toward the four beasts.

The four beasts' expressions flickered as they lurched away. Unfortunately for them, they were too slow. In the blink of an eye, they were overwhelmed. The flying seeds slammed into them, boring into their bodies and seemingly drawing them up as food!

When the four beasts began to scream miserably, Daoist Heavenspan noticed, and frowned. The sight of his four beasts rapidly withering away caused his heart to pound in his chest.

“What an incredible seed from beyond the heavens!” Snorting coldly, his eyes flashed with determination as he performed an incantation gesture with his right hand. Voice as cold as ice, he said, “World relics, to me!”

As the words left his mouth, the four beasts suddenly shuddered and exploded into bits!

From inside of the four beasts emerged millions upon millions of streams of sword energy, which screamed through the air like a tempest and then slashed into Bai Xiaochun. Wounds opened up everywhere, and although his powers of regeneration went to work immediately to heal him, his eyes still widened....

Then, the sword energy shot back, and became six beams of light that swirled around Daoist Heavenspan. Shockingly... six colorful swords could be seen, all of them unique in design and appearance.

They seemed incomparably sharp, and Bai Xiaochun could tell from just looking at them that they were ancient and powerful to the extreme!!

“Were those four beasts embodiments of the Celestial’s magical items...? Wait, no. Maybe the Celestial hid the six ancient swords

inside of them...?” Even as he shot backward, the countless flying seeds swirled back, converging into the shape of a damaged and bedraggled moonflower. Its aura was weak, and it looked to be in bad shape thanks to the injuries inflicted by the explosion of sword energy.

“Interesting....” Daoist Heavenspan said, hovering in midair, looking at Bai Xiaochun with coldly shining eyes.

“No wonder the gravekeeper chose you.... In all the years, no one other than him has ever forced me to use my life essence Daoswords!

“The Undying Live Forever Technique has its five shackles and five sealing marks.... Spectacular, to say the least. However, the very reason why I can change my own fate in heaven-defying fashion is... the nine Daogates that I created!

“I have cultivated these Daogates for my entire life, and they require the use of these six Daoswords to employ.... In fact, it was by using the Daoswords to open the Daogates that I was able to kill the Arch-Emperor and slaughter countless numbers of his people!

“Today... I will similarly use my life essence Daoswords to open the Daogates and... end your life!” Even as he spoke, his energy began to rise higher and higher. Rumbling sounds filled all creation, and wild colors flashed in the sky. Massive waves covered the surface of the Heavenspan Sea.

It was as if he had become the origin of all energy and power in the world, as if his every action or move could cause the Heavenspan Realm to respond!

Bai Xiaochun panted, a sensation of danger filling him the likes of which he had never experienced before. And the source was none other than the Celestial. Based on what he could sense, not even his powers of regeneration would allow him to recover from the next attack!

And yet, he did not show any signs of backing down. The Celestial had a trump card... but so did Bai Xiaochun!

The Celestial's energy caused the entire world to shake around him. Strange light erupted from his eyes as he threw his arms wide and spoke in a voice that filled the world!

“Daogate... Palace of Water!”

His words seemed to thrum with the power of a great Dao! As they did, his six swords flew forth, linking together to form a design with three rows!

The top row featured two swords in a line, with a gap between them!

The second row featured two swords together, with no gap!

[The third row looked exactly like the first row!](#)

Even as the design was completed, seemingly infinite streams of water vapor began to rise up from the withered lands of Heavenspan. It was as if all the water in the world... were forming together into an ocean. That much water carried indescribable weight, and all of it began to fall onto Bai Xiaochun!

Bai Xiaochun backed up in the face of the seemingly endless amount of water filling the sky. It was water that thrummed with destructive power, power that seemed capable of eradicating any life force that got in its way.

“Celestial magic? Nine Daogates...? Am I supposed to be impressed?!” Eyes bloodshot, he threw his head back and roared, clenching his right hand into a fist that caused a black hole to explode into existence. At the same time, a shadowy emperor appeared behind him, bursting with a domineering air.

“Undying... Emperor's Fist!

The swords form the shape of one of the [eight trigrams](#) which looks like this ☵. It is specifically the “kan” trigram which

represents, among other things, water.

Chapter 1024: One Glance Abyss Crystallization

The Daogate Palace of Water was part of the Nine Ruins!

The water of the Nine Ruins made the Palace of Water boundless!

The endless amounts of water around Bai Xiaochun thrummed with explosive, destructive power, and seemed indefatigable. It was seemingly capable of crushing anything and everything, and absorbing it to become part of the water.

Water was innately a Yin and feminine element, but Bai Xiaochun still unleashed the Undying Emperor's Fist. It was an attack backed with unyielding, dominating might, and was a convergence of both his fleshly body and cultivation base power!

No longer was this a quintuple power fist strike, but at the moment, Bai Xiaochun didn't have time to calculate exactly how powerful it was. His only thought was that he needed to break this seemingly endless flow of water around him!

Even as his fist struck out, the fist of the shadowy emperor also struck out!

Colors flashed and winds screamed. The world shook as a tremor ran through the water, which turned into vibrations that increased in intensity with every moment!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes were completely bloodshot as he then shouted, "Stronger this time!"

Howling madly, he unleashed another Undying Emperor's Fist, which was even more shockingly powerful than before!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!!

An indescribably powerful tempest erupted out into the ocean of water created by the Yin powers of the Palace of Water. Within moments, a limit was reached, and a series of explosions occurred!

The enormous sea immediately began to break up!

As it did, heavy rain began to fall in all parts of the world!

The Wildlands was no exception, nor Arch-Emperor City. Countless individuals looked up to see rain falling down toward them as the world shook beneath their feet.

Back at the Heavenspan Sea, Daoist Heavenspan's eyes narrowed. Over and over again, Bai Xiaochun's might caused his unease to build.

Snorting coldly, he didn't hesitate to say, "Daogate: Palace of Mountains!"

At that point, his six swords once again began to move toward each other.

However, before Daoist Heavenspan could finish creating the Palace of Mountains, Bai Xiaochun turned into something like a meteor that shot forward in attack.

In response, Daoist Heavenspan snorted and performed an incantation gesture with his right hand, causing the six swords to rapidly lock together in the form of a design different from the last!

Shockingly, it caused a mountain to materialize out of nowhere, which then slammed into Bai Xiaochun!

It was thousands upon thousands of meters tall, and thrummed with shocking energy. The moment of impact caused a deafening boom to ring out, and also caused Bai Xiaochun's expression to flicker. Howling, he unleashed another fist strike, only to find that more and more mountains were falling down toward him!

Each one was larger than the last! In the blink of an eye, more than a hundred mountains filled the sky, with the last one being tens upon tens of thousands of meters high! And all of them were smashing down toward Bai Xiaochun, clearly giving him no room to evade!

Even more shocking was that the Heavenspan Sea began to rumble as a mountain rose up from beneath its surface. More mountains appeared on either side of him as well! As of this moment, countless mountains became like magical items under the control of Daoist Heavenspan, to attack Bai Xiaochun!

Bai Xiaochun could destroy one mountain. But as soon as he did, ten more appeared, and then a hundred, and then more! Each mountain was larger and more powerful than the one before it!

Bai Xiaochun's eyes continued to flicker with shock. Daoist Heavenspan's Daogates were virtually beyond compare! It was something the likes of which Bai Xiaochun had only seen during the spectacular battle in the Wildlands, when the gravekeeper had used his five elements Daoist magic!

Bai Xiaochun's expression was unprecedentedly serious as his Undying Blood began to burn. Blood qi immediately began to swirl out from his skin, and a maddened, bloodthirsty look sprang up in his eyes. And yet, he didn't even come close to losing consciousness!

He now had complete and full control of the Godkiller technique!

As he unleashed the Godkiller, blood qi towered to the heavens. Bai Xiaochun howled at the top of his lungs as he sent the burning blood mist out to meet the mountains!

Every mountain that touched the mist shattered, its energy completely drained away as it transformed into ash....

The blood mist began to grow stronger, casting the whole world into red light. Even as the mountains shattered, the Celestial frowned. Snorting coldly, he waved his sleeve and said, "Daogate: Palace of Lightning!"

The booming of heavenly thunder exploded out, along with numerous black lightning bolts. In the blink of an eye, they filled the sky, and then began to fall onto Bai Xiaochun!

There was so much lightning that it seemed to have no end, like the most ultimate of heavenly tribulations! As this Daogate opened, Daoist Heavenspan seemed to become the monarch of all lightning and thunder!

This was a celestial magic that Daoist Heavenspan had personally created, and was one of the reasons why the gravekeeper had described him in such dramatic terms to Bai Xiaochun in the past!

This celestial magic that bordered on a great Dao was also one of the reasons that Daoist Heavenspan had been able to overthrow the Arch-Emperor Dynasty. It was the reason he was so confident that, if he left this world and went to the world beyond... he would be able to become a true celestial. He would definitely make his breakthrough! Furthermore, he would eventually be able to reach the peak level of power, the likes of which were as rare as phoenix feathers or qilin horns even in the world beyond. He would become an archaean!

“With my talent, I am destined to become an archaean! Why do I have to be stuck in this cramped bug's nest of a world!? Why do I have to struggle on death's door, just waiting for my longevity to run out...? I... refuse to accept this!!” A vicious, insane expression covered the Celestial's face as he strode forward, surrounded by crashing thunder and lightning. 100,000 bolts. 1,000,000 bolts. 10,000,000 bolts of lightning!

Bai Xiaochun had his Godkiller technique, and had previously consumed lightning to advance his cultivation. But this... was lightning created by the Celestial's Daoist magic, and was something he could not simply shrug off.

As the boundless sheets of heavenly lightning dropped toward him, Bai Xiaochun looked up at them, his eyes shining with no less madness than Daoist Heavenspan's.

“Nice magical technique,” he growled. “But... I have something just like it!” Eyes burning with killing intent, he threw both hands

out in front of him! Drawing all of the blood qi back into him, he unleashed the power of the Live Forever Codex.

The Undying Codex had its five divine abilities. But the Live Forever Codex had five Daoist magics!

As of this moment, he was using the first of the magics that he himself had created as part of the Live Forever Codex. They were... world-shaking Daoist magics of his own creation!

“One Glance Abyss Crystallization!” As Bai Xiaochun’s voice rolled out, it sounded like an expression of the Dao, as though a great bell had been struck that resonated through all heaven and earth.... This was the heavenly reverberation of a true Daoist magic!

In the briefest of moments, the entire Heavenspan Sea... emitted loud cracking sounds as it transformed into crystal!

All the waves and ripples in it became solid and crystallized! Inside and out... the Heavenspan Sea was now as transparent as glass!

The Heavenspan Sea now looked like a land of ice, glowing with radiant and shocking light!

That blinding light shot up to meet the lightning above... whereupon more cracking sounds rang out. Suddenly, it was in completely shocking fashion that the entire crystalline sea shattered into millions upon billions upon trillions of crystalline swords!

Shining with boundless light, and multitudinous razor-sharp manifestations of sword energy, the crystalline swords all turned upward and shot toward... Daoist Heavenspan!

At this point... Daoist Heavenspan’s face fell!

Chapter 1025: Live Forever Lamp!

Countless crystalline swords began to rise up into the air from the crystallized abyss that was the Heavenspan Sea, creating a screaming whistle that filled the world.

The swords cast dazzling light in all directions, to such blinding effect that Daoist Heavenspan's face fell from the shock of it all.

Although he was very familiar with how the divine abilities of the Live Forever Codex worked, this was his first time seeing one of Bai Xiaochun's personalized Daoist magics.

Furthermore, Daoist Heavenspan was very well aware that the power of the Daoist magics of the Live Forever Codex surpassed any other ordinary techniques by far. In addition, the specific way that such divine abilities were created had to do with the Dao and will of the individual cultivator.

Each cultivator had a different Dao and a different will, and thus, the Daoist magics they could create would all be different. Therefore, it didn't matter how deeply Daoist Heavenspan had researched the Live Forever Codex, there was no way he could be familiar with Bai Xiaochun's Daoist magics before they were revealed!

"What will Bai Xiaochun's Daoist magics accomplish in the end?!" Daoist Heavenspan didn't dare to look down on Bai Xiaochun in this moment. Looking around at the endless cloud of crystalline swords, he prepared to flee.

However, the swords were too fast, and before he could do anything, they were upon him.

Looking slightly nervous, he performed a double-handed incantation gesture, causing the lightning from the Palace of Lightning to shrink down. Instead of using that lightning to attack Bai Xiaochun, he threw it up as a shield against the crystalline

swords.

Rumbling sounds filled all heaven and earth as the millions upon billions upon trillions of crystalline swords smashed into the lightning shield. The Dao Gate: Palace of Lightning was immediately weakened and began to shrink down, and yet, managed to stand against the assault of swords.

The crystalline swords slammed against the shield and then toppled down, falling one on top of the other to create a huge pile underneath Daoist Heavenspan!

The pile of swords grew higher and higher until finally, the lightning shield shattered. By the time it was all over, the masses of swords had created something like a small mountain beneath Daoist Heavenspan's feet.

“So, that's your Daoist magic, Bai Xiaochun?!” Although Daoist Heavenspan was panting a bit as he stood there on the mountainous pile of swords, his eyes shone with piercing light.

Bai Xiaochun looked back at him coldly, then extended his right hand, pointed out with his finger, and said, “Heavenly Canopy Lampshade!”

As soon as the words left Bai Xiaochun's mouth, the sky began to tremble and grow murky. Then, the sky seemed to break up into numerous layers, almost like cloth!

In the blink of an eye, the lowermost of the layers began to drop down and cover Daoist Heavenspan!

The heavenly canopy was difficult to see clearly at first, and was identifiable mostly by how it twisted and distorted the air around it. In response, the Celestial's expression flickered, and he quickly performed an incantation gesture to unleash the Daogate: Palace of Wind. As he did, a black wind sprang out of nowhere to block the descending heavenly canopy.

However, even as the Celestial's Daoist magic was unleashed, a

second heavenly canopy began to fall, and then a third. Soon, the sky itself was starting to seem thin! Before long, the eighth canopy had dropped down toward the Heavenspan Sea, and seemed just on the verge of sealing Daoist Heavenspan!

Daoist Heavenspan now stood on a pile of crystal, surrounded by a black wind, struggling to escape. Meanwhile, the eight heavenly canopies dropped down, spreading over him just like a lampshade!

Despite being a manifestation of the fallen sky, the lampshade wasn't blue, but rather light gray. By this point, enough of the sky had peeled away from above that it was possible to see the black void beyond!

Daoist Heavenspan panted heavily, his heart filled with unease and a sensation of crisis. Bellowing, he sent the black wind to batter this way and that, and yet, it did no good.

Even as Daoist Heavenspan's shock intensified, Bai Xiaochun's eyes turned even icier. Performing an incantation gesture with his left hand, he waved his finger and spoke in a voice that echoed like thunder.

“Boundless Longevity, Endless Life!” As the four words left his mouth, the aura of the Live Forever Codex erupted out into the world, filling the air with... innumerable [longevity](#) characters!

Although the characters were very small, they all pulsed with the aura of the Live Forever Codex. Furthermore, there were literally too many to count! In fact, there were far, far more than the crystalline swords from before!

A moment later, rumbling sounds could be heard as the longevity characters shot toward the heavenly canopy lampshade that covered Daoist Heavenspan, and merged into it!

As they fused with the lampshade, the characters emanated a shocking aura which strengthened the lampshade and made its sealing powers vastly more incredible than before!

Inside, Daoist Heavenspan was starting to get very nervous. All of a sudden, he had the premonition that if he didn't get out of this heavenly canopy lampshade... he would be in profound danger!

"I have to get out of here. Now!!" He tried to move, but no matter what he did, he was incapable of freeing himself. Overwhelmed by a sensation of danger, he howled and performed an incantation gesture to unleash the Daogate: Palace of Fire.

Instantly, Daoist Heavenspan was surrounded by majestic heavenly fire that sent indescribable heat out in all directions, setting the heavenly canopy ablaze!

It was in that moment that the killing intent in Bai Xiaochun's eyes blazed. Ignoring the blazing heavenly canopies, he reached out to point at the sealed Celestial.

"Thou Art The Candle!!"

His voice crashed like deafening thunder, and slammed directly into Daoist Heavenspan's body!

Daoist Heavenspan let out a miserable shriek. His eyes were crimson, and his hair in complete disarray as... without any warning whatsoever... a layer of wax appeared all over him!!

It was sinister and white, and in the blink of an eye, it covered him completely. With every moment that passed, it grew thicker and thicker, as did the Celestial's unease. Unleashing the power of his cultivation base to try to protect himself, he shouted, "Daogate: Palace of Marshes!"

The Palace of Marshes didn't summon water, but rather, a swamp!!

As Daoist Heavenspan opened his mouth to utter the words, white wax spilled into it! However, the area surrounding him still turned into a marshy swamp, filled with decay and rot. It was the type of thing that could melt anything within its bounds, and apparently, he hoped that it would neutralize the wax and cause

the seal of the heavenly canopy to melt away!

Rumbling sounds filled heaven and earth as the power of the rotting swamp combined with the effects of the previous Daogates, causing the heavenly canopies to begin to break apart. However... with the bolstering of the longevity characters, the lampshade held!

No matter what techniques Daoist Heavenspan used, no matter how strong his Daogates were, as of this moment, he simply couldn't fight Bai Xiaochun's Live Forever Daoist magic!

Despite being counteracted to a degree by the rotting swamp, the wax continued to build up around Daoist Heavenspan. Soon, he was completely white, and looked like... he was made of wax!!

"Dammit. DAMMIT!!" he shouted, his expression twisting ferociously. Drawing on what appeared to be an even more powerful magic than before, he blasted away at the white wax, which began to crumble and crack. At the same time, the heavenly canopy lampshade also seemed to be on the verge of shattering....

However, that was when Bai Xiaochun took a deep breath and closed his eyes for a moment. When he opened them... fire blazed to the heavens!!

"Live Forever Lamp, Integrate!"

The Celestial's body was the waxy candle, and Bai Xiaochun's eyes... were the spark!!

This was none other than the personalized divine ability that Bai Xiaochun had created after mastering the Live Forever Codex. It was... the Live Forever Lamp!

The character for longevity looks like this: 寿

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